The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary Britain

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Policy Exchange

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About the Author

Eric Kaufmann is a Senior Fellow at Policy Exchange and Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. A political scientist, Kaufmann is the author of numerous books, examining the impact of ideological and population shifts on identity and politics. These include *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth* (Profile 2010) and *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration, and the Future of White Majorities* (Penguin 2018).

Contents

Main Findings

- A nationally-representative survey of over 1800 members of the public, fielded by YouGov on 9-11 May 2022 finds:
- The British public leans approximately 2 to 1 against the cultural leftist position across 20 culture wars issues.
- Opposition varies, for example, from 97 percent on whether schoolchildren should be separated into oppressors and oppressed by race to 85 percent on Britain being more racist than other countries to 59 percent against the idea that Britain is a racist country to 43 percent on support for people displaying their pronouns. The cultural leftist position was only in a (slight) majority in 3 of 20 issues polled.
- Cancel culture issues split the far left from the centre left, centre and right. Critical Race Theory-themed issues pertaining to heritage and history strongly mobilise the right and centre while fragmenting the left. Hence the consensus view on culture wars issues is against the cultural left. Politicians or parties who fall on the wrong side of this are likely to suffer an electoral penalty while those who stand with the majority stand to benefit.
- Voters under 35 are significantly more likely to endorse the cultural leftist view on culture wars issues, with a ratio closer to 1:1 on these questions, with opinion evenly divided. This portends a rise in prominence of these questions in the years to come as Britain shifts left toward a more contested position.
- Those aged 18 to 25 split evenly on whether Kathleen Stock should have been defended by her university and whether J.K. Rowling should have been dropped by her publisher.
- A quarter of British people worry about losing their reputation or job due to interpretations of what they say or have posted online.
- Close to half of right-leaning voters under age 35 worry about losing their reputation or job for speech or social media posts.
- Most workers in large organisations have taken diversity training. Around 4 in 10 British workers have taken diversity training, rising to over 6 in 10 among those working in organisations with more than 100 people.
- Diversity training has a significant chilling effect. 41 percent of right-wing voters who have taken diversity training worry about losing their job or reputation for speech. This compares to 20

percent of left and liberal voters who have taken diversity training and 27 percent of right voters who have not taken such training.

- Diversity training may be limiting black advancement. There is no significant difference between left and right voters' willingness to criticise a black work colleague, at around 20-25 percent. But among voters who lean right, diversity training has a significant adverse impact. 38 percent of right party voters who have taken diversity training say they would feel uncomfortable providing negative feedback to a black work colleague.

- 45 percent of right-wing voters who worry about losing their job or reputation and have taken diversity training would feel uncomfortable providing negative feedback to a black work colleague. This compares to 31 percent for worried left and liberal voters and 20 percent for left/liberal-leaning voters who don't worry about losing their job or reputation.

- 54 percent say the current political climate prevents them saying what they truly believe, rising to 76 percent for right-of-centre voters.

- By a 51-32 margin, people think that Britain should focus on the positives more than the negatives in its past, and want the balance of pride and shame taught to lean 60:40 toward pride.

- By a 49-31 margin, people believe that organisations' equity and diversity policies should focus as much or more on ideological diversity as on racial and gender diversity.

- Nearly half – 44 percent – of Leave voters working in Remain-dominated workplace departments say they feel uncomfortable voicing their beliefs at work. This compares to 19 percent of Remainers who say they would be uncomfortable expressing their beliefs in Leave-dominated workplaces.

- Overall, just 45 percent of Leave supporters feel comfortable expressing their views at work compared to 67 percent of Remain supporters.

- Remain voters are highly siloed within Remain-leaning workplaces, with 67 percent working in environments they perceive as Remain-dominant. Among Remainers with degrees, 77 percent work in Remain-dominant workplace departments and just 4 percent in Leave-dominant departments.

- Most Leave voters work in places where they don't know the political background of their colleagues. This seems to partly be due to Leavers' lower attention to politics, but may also arise because Leavers are relatively 'shy' about their beliefs.

- Women are significantly more likely than men to endorse trans women's right to enter women's spaces. For instance, 36 percent of women support the idea that trans women should be allowed to enter women's refuges while 32 percent oppose this. Men oppose this 40-30.

- The report recommends that conservative parties should feel

confident in advancing conservative positions on cultural issues, secure in the knowledge that the majority of voters share their values, while left or liberal parties should seek to downplay such questions in favour of economic issues.

- The report recommends that diversity training in organisations be paused until newer variants can be shown to produce measurable positive outcomes.

- The report recommends that school history texts not be drawn primarily from critical academic sources, but should instead emphasise positive national achievements in equal measure, if not more, than criticism of the national past. This should include elements that celebrate the contribution of people from different backgrounds, such as the role of Commonwealth soldiers during the World Wars.

- The report recommends that public workplaces not promote cultural leftist positions: these are political ideas not consensus values. Government should enforce impartiality on these issues across the public sector, including the civil service, NHS and schools.

- The report recommends that private workplaces not promote cultural leftist positions: these are political, not moral. Doing so can alienate workers, lead to more brittle inter-racial interactions, and make it harder to retain talent.

Cultural Liberalism and Cultural Leftism in the British Public

The question of politically-correct speech limits is an important barometer of cultural leftism, gauging the degree to which people believe that freedom of expression should be limited in order to prevent psychological harm or inequalities of cultural power between groups.

In everyday life, few would endorse an ethic of speaking one's mind about a mother-in-law's weight. Likewise, most would object to suppressing all criticism of an inconsiderate roommate who fails to pay his share of the bills just because he is thin-skinned.

When it comes to members of historically marginalised race, gender or sexual identity groups, however, there is a significant ideological minority that advocates for a zero-tolerance approach, which some characterise as *wokeness*, a term that is generally used as a put-down, but which also has a more technical definition as <u>the sacralisation of historically marginalised identity groups</u>.

For most, however, the question is where people stand along a continuum from total sensitivity to complete freedom - especially as regards speech which might be interpreted as offensive to some members of historically marginalised groups but is viewed by many as necessary for freedom, reason, identity or community in an open society. Some refer to the former group as 'identity liberals' and the latter as 'identity conservatives.'[1]

I use the term *cultural leftism* to refer to the belief that minorities must be protected from psychological harm arising from forms of dominant culture, and that a radical transformation of science, institutions, narratives and culture can redistribute power from dominant to subaltern groups.

Cultural leftists are opposed by *cultural liberals*, who prioritise freedom of expression, equal treatment without regard to identity, the scientific method, freedom of conscience and the primacy of classical liberal traditions of law.

Cultural conservatives prioritise the defense of national, ethnic and religious traditions. The dominant form of cultural conservatism in Britain is *cultural patriotism*. In the past the major conflict was between cultural conservatives on the one hand, and cultural liberals and socialists on the other. Today, however, the rising power of cultural leftism in elite institutions largely pits a rearguard of cultural liberals and patriots against cultural leftists.

1. Sobolewska, M. and R. Ford (2020). <u>Brexit-land: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics</u>, Cambridge University Press.

In this report, I ask where the public stands on the tension between cultural leftism and its cultural-liberal and cultural-patriot interlocutors, and what the shape of public opinion means for politics and the future.

Two of the main conclusions are that cultural liberals and patriots outnumber cultural leftists 2 to 1. However, among young people, the balance is closer to parity, suggesting that Britain's historic cultural liberalism and patriotism are likely to come under increasing pressure in the future.

Where does the Public Stand?

Previous research finds that most British people are worried by what the *Economist* terms 'progressive illiberalism.'[2] An influential study by *More in Common* finds that 72 percent of Britons view political correctness as a problem, but 73 percent also consider hate speech a problem. Here around 64 percent of right-leaning segments tend to agree that hate speech is a problem but just 28 percent of the far left 'progressive activist' group accept that political correctness is also a problem. What this question does not do, however, is force people to choose – which better reveals how respondents prioritise the two concerns.[3] While much turns on what people have in mind when they think of these terms, their relative prioritisation is telling.

Philip Tetlock argues that people have differing rank-orderings of values. People may rank two values highly, but prioritise one over the other when the two conflict. Thus even if someone values free speech and minority protection relatively highly, they may not stick with either value when forced to make tradeoffs, depending on the question.[4] Different rank-orderings of values in turn furnish the basis of identities such as ideology and party, which matter for politics. It is therefore vital to map people's tradeoffs between values and not merely the way they answer abstract one-dimensional values items.

Bobby Duffy and colleagues at King's College London have done important work in Britain using forced-choice questions, which I believe are vital for teasing out people's relative value priorities.[5] Duffy finds that the British population splits evenly 35-35 between those who believe people are too easily offended and those who think they should be more sensitive. Yet question wording is important here. Duffy also finds that people are more likely to view freedom of expression as under threat (38%) than freedom from 'threatening or abusive opinions' (14%), with a third saying both are equally under threat.[6]

Questions about political correctness in my YouGov survey, which I will cover next, could be interpreted as placing PC limits on everyday speech in the name of not giving offense or as more serious institutionally-backed sanctions for speech violations, such as being fired for saying that trans women are not women. Not making unambiguously racist jokes or comments could be seen by some as the definition of PC, while for others the term refers mainly to an overreaction to innocuous speech, resulting in attempts to control expression and institute faddish, politicised artificial language such as 'Latinx' or 'racialised' people. Some respondents will have mild forms of PC in mind (i.e. gently censuring highly offensive talk),

2. 'The threat from the illiberal left,' *Economist*, 4 September, 2021.

3. Juan-Torres et. al., 'Britain's Choice,' p. 26.

4. Tetlock, Philip E. "A value pluralism model of ideological reasoning." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 50.4 (1986): 819-27.

5. Duffy, Bobby, Paul Stoneman, Kirstie Hewlett, George May, Gideon Skinner and Glenn Gottfried, 'Freedom of speech in the UK's "culture war",' Ipsos/King's College London, May 2022.

6. Duffy et. al., 'Freedom of Speech in the UK's "Culture War",' p.5

while others may envision extreme versions of PC whereby ambiguous speech leads to outrage and calls for 'cancellation' (social, institutional and reputational punishment). Asking people whether political correctness has gone too far will tend to bring the latter, more extreme, version to mind.

By contrast, the long-running YouGov question 'Thinking about political correctness, are you generally in favour of it (it protects against discrimination), or against it (it stifles freedom of speech),' may evoke more milder versions. In my UK data, 66 percent say PC has gone too far while just 16 percent disagree, but on the YouGov PC question, just 48 percent oppose PC while 33 percent are in favour. This is a decline of 18 points in the level of opposition to PC as we adjust question wording. In my US survey I find an even more dramatic change, from 74-14 to 41-37, a 33-point decline in opposition. Part of the effect may also arise due to priming people about the reason for PC (to prevent discrimination).

Having noted the importance of question wording, it is instructive to examine which characteristics predict attitudes to PC. While some correctly note that political correctness on identity questions was not a component of Marxist thinking (or even decry it is a corporate invention), there is no question that self-categorised left-right political belief is the most powerful predictor of public opinion on culture war questions.[7]
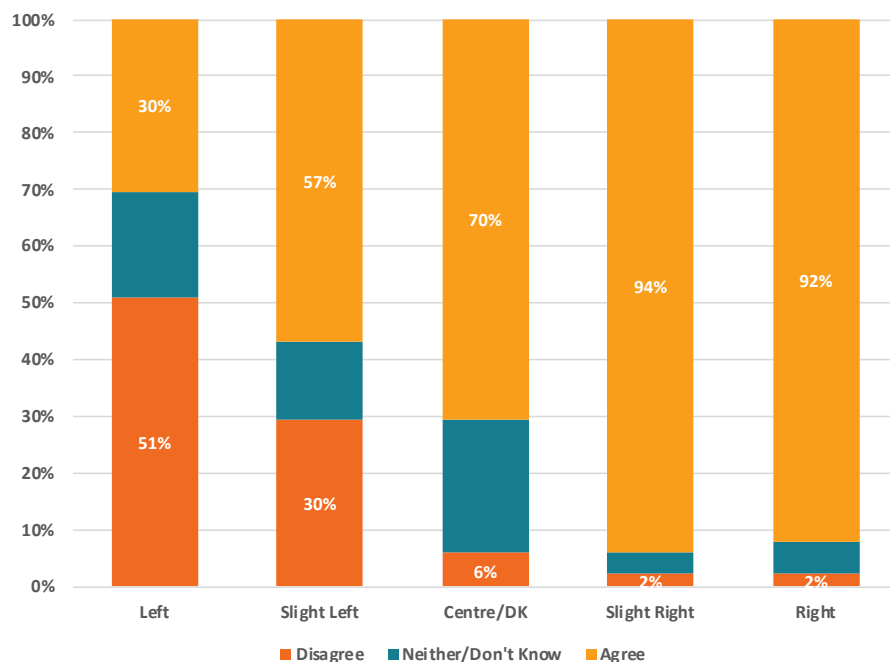
A number of political psychologists note that psychological dispositions underlie people's ideologies, even as the political context can produce different configurations of issues under the left or right labels. In Eastern Europe, for example, conservative cultural views and left-wing economic positions are often bundled together. Yet even if there is no clear intellectual basis for a socialist in the West to support PC, it may be that the underlying psychological dispositions which incline a person toward economic redistribution also incline them toward identitarian redistribution. Jonathan Haidt, for example, identifies a set of moral foundations, of which 'care/harm', the protection of the weak from harm, and 'fairness,' defined in terms of equality of outcome, are the main considerations for western leftists. Those on the right, by contrast, balance these considerations with a wider set of moral foundations such as respect for authority and loyalty to in-group.[8]

Accordingly, the first point to note in Figures 1 and 2 is how powerful the link is between left-right self-identification and attitudes to PC. In Figure 1, half of those who identify as very left wing (points 1 and 2 on a 7-point left-right scale) disagree that PC has gone too far, and just 30 percent agree. Against this, 70 percent of centrists and over 90 percent of those on the right agree that PC has gone too far. The difference between the far left and moderate left is almost 30 points, a noticeable difference. Here it is worth noting that nearly half of people are centrist or don't know, with 17 percent left, 15 percent slightly left, 13 percent slightly right and 10 percent right.

7. Wallace-Wells, Benjamin, 'The Marxist Who Antagonizes Liberals and the Left,' *New Yorker*, 31 January 2022

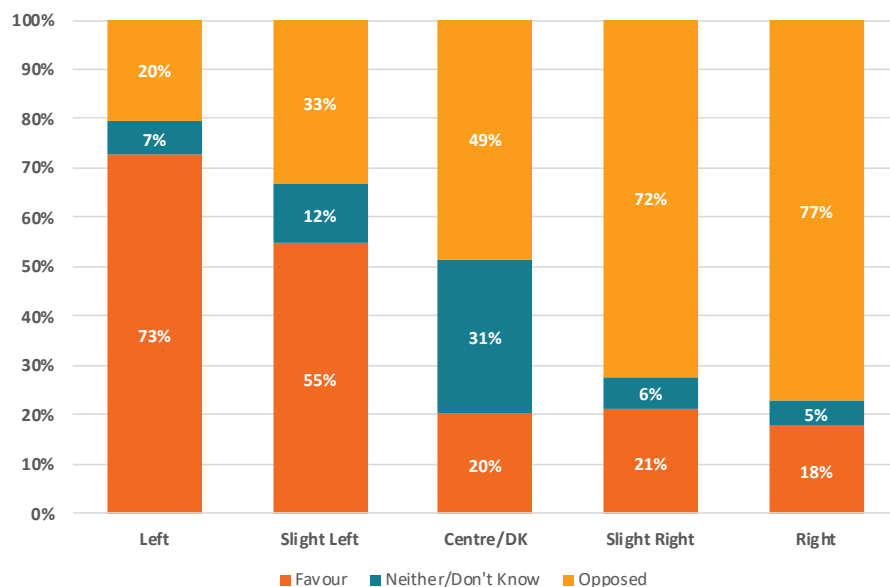8. Haidt's theory argues that humans possess six psychological 'taste buds' for morality. Progressives and conservatives both have the foundations of care/harm, fairness/equality and liberty/oppression, but only conservatives value loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion and sanctity/degradation. Haidt, J. (2012). The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion, Vintage.

Figure 1: 'Political Correctness has gone too far,' by Ideology

In Figure 2, when freedom of speech is placed in tension with protecting groups from discrimination, the care/harm and equality moral foundations arguably explain why far leftists lean 73-20 in favour of PC and slight leftists 55-33 in favour while centrists (20-49) and those on the right (20-74) are clearly opposed. This 52 to 53-point gap between ideological extremes is as wide in Britain as in America, where it stands at 47 to 53 points.[9]

Figure 2: 'Thinking about political correctness, are you generally in favour of it (it protects against discrimination), or against it (it stifles freedom of speech)?'
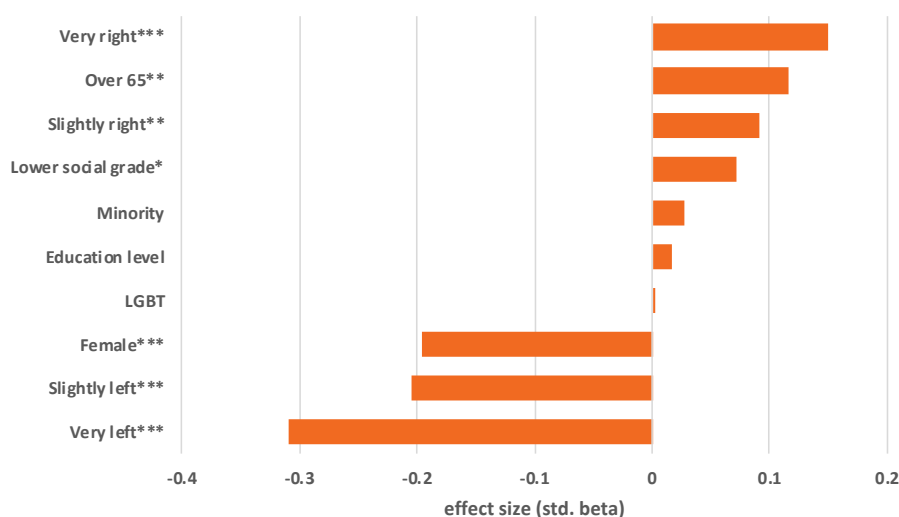

9. Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture War in Contemporary America,' p. 10.

Figure 3 presents a statistical model of the 'thinking about political correctness' question from Figure 2 which shows that ideology is the most important correlate, with leftist respondents significantly less likely than centrists to oppose PC and those on the right somewhat more likely. Those in lower occupation classes (C2DE) are more opposed to PC than those in the professional and managerial class, with controls for education and ideology. Women are substantially less anti-PC than men, reflecting Haidt's finding that they score higher on the care/harm moral foundation. Finally, those over age 65 are significantly more opposed to political correctness than other age groups.

Ethnic minorities, LGBT respondents and those with higher levels of education were not, after controlling for ideology, age and gender, more likely to support PC. American results look similar, with the left more different from the centre than the right, and older respondents more anti-PC while there is less difference between younger and middle-aged people. Where the US differs is that race is borderline significant for predicting opposition to PC while being female produced a significant effect only a third as large as in Britain.

These results echo those of Duffy et. al.'s study, where he noted that 'Leave voters are 4.5 times more likely than Remain voters to believe people are too easily offended, while men are 3.3 times more likely than women to feel this way.'[10] In my survey, using a similar model, Leave voters are 4.3 times as likely to oppose PC as Remain voters while men are 1.8 times more likely to oppose PC than women. What is important to note about the PC question, however, is that the left – especially the far left - stands out more from the centre of public opinion than does the right.

Figure 3: Predictors of Opposition to PC

*p<.05, **p<.01, **p<.001.*

10. Duffy et. al., 'Freedom of Speech in the UK's "Culture War"', p.4

In addition to crafting surveys in which people are forced to make tradeoffs, I believe it is important to have respondents make decisions about both hypothetical and real-life situations. In order to understand how people would respond to an actual situation, it is vital to move from the abstract to the concrete. In Duffy and colleagues' King's study, a number of hypotheticals were used, including whether a TV network should take down a comedian's show for using language that was offensive to minorities, or whether a talk by an academic should be cancelled over their views toward trans women.

Broadly speaking, the UK public supported certain speech restrictions – such as banning fans who boo players taking the knee (46 percent support v. 26 percent against) or getting a co-worker fired for making sexist jokes about women (42-29). They opposed others, such as cancelling a talk by an academic critical of trans women (44-25), with a majority opposing punishing a police officer for posts before the officer joined the force and using violence to prevent hate speech. On balance, 69 percent of those surveyed backed fewer than half the speech restrictions, 13 percent supported half and 18 percent supported a majority of speech limits. 42 percent opposed most restrictions, leading the authors to conclude that, on balance, 'a larger proportion of the UK public…are actively against regular use of these types of interventions than actively in favour of them.'[11]

This study builds on Duffy's work in two ways. First, by moving from hypotheticals to concrete cases that actually occurred in order to elicit views on real-life situations. Second, by augmenting questions on freedom of speech issues – which explore the tension between cultural leftism and cultural liberalism - with questions on so-called 'Critical Race Theory' issues which pit cultural leftist perspectives on the past against cultural-patriot concerns. A number of questions, such as whether the word 'spooky' should be used, involve tensions between cultural leftism and *both* cultural liberalism and cultural patriotism.

Across the range of questions used in this survey, respondents who offered an opinion one way or the other split 70-30 against the cultural leftist position. Only on 3 items did the cultural leftist position edge out that of liberals/patriots. I thereby find, like Duffy's study, that British public opinion leans toward cultural liberalism more than cultural leftism. The split is approximately 2 cultural liberals or patriots for each cultural leftist, a similar ratio to that which I uncovered for the United States using many analogous questions. Of course, this is by no means a definitive list of questions, and one could quibble about whether the questions reflect a representative cross-section of speech conflicts across British society.

As with the King's study, the balance of responses shifts depending on the question. Less offensive speech and stronger anti-speech responses tend to elicit more opposition than questions which posit highly offensive speech or extreme consequences for speech. Consider the following questions:

11. Duffy et al., 'Freedom of Speech in the UK's "Culture War"', pp.12-15

> *'Do you think schools in your area should assign white students the status of "privileged" and assign non-white students the status of "oppressed"?'*
>
> *'Some say the phrase "spooky" should not be used because the word "spook", which it resembles, acquired a racist meaning after World War II. Do you agree or disagree it shouldn't be used?'*

In the first case, 97 percent of UK respondents with an opinion opposed a school separating pupils by race into oppressors and oppressed, with only 3 percent in support. In the second instance, 93 percent of British respondents who took a view disagreed that 'spooky' should not be used, with just 7 percent saying it should be restricted.

At the other end of the scale, people were asked, 'Do you support or oppose people displaying their pronouns (e.g. he/him or they/them) for example on work emails or social media profiles?' 57 percent of those with an opinion supported people displaying pronouns, with 43 percent opposed. This question pits the cultural leftist position against a cultural conservative view that pronouns break from tradition or endorse gender ideology or the cultural liberal view that such displays put pressure on those who don't wish to display pronouns, or believe sex and gender to be coterminous, to conform. However, the question could also be interpreted by cultural liberals as one endorsing people's freedom to express themselves.

Another question asked people which of the following positions came closer to their view: 'The school curriculum should focus on the most important or influential people in British history, regardless of background (even if that means some groups don't receive much coverage)' or 'The school curriculum should make sure it includes people of all backgrounds in British history (even if that means including less important or influential figures).' Here opinion also broke 57-43 in favour of the cultural leftist position (inclusion) over the cultural patriot view that traditional national importance should be paramount or the cultural liberal view that merit should be the central criterion.

A further finely-balanced question asked people which of the following statements came closer to their view:

> *'People being worried about the consequences of posting their opinions online is a price worth paying in order to prevent racism, sexism and homophobia online'*
>
> *'Putting up with opinions online that some might see as racist, sexist or homophobic is a price worth paying in order to ensure people are free to express their views online'*
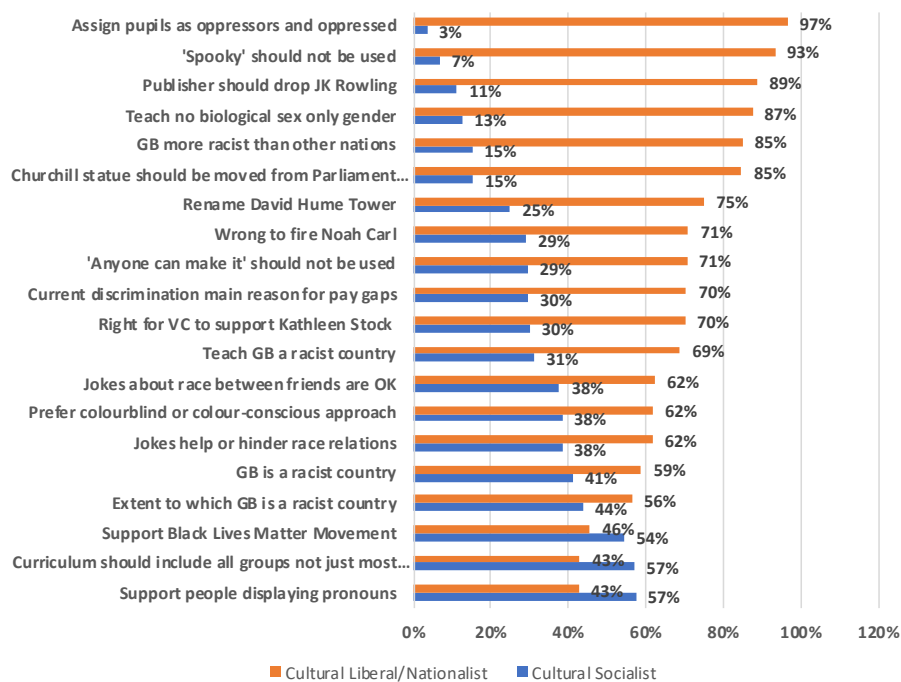
Respondents selected the second option, but only by a 38-34 margin, with 28 percent undecided. This nicely illustrates the tension between cultural leftism and cultural liberalism, between concern over hate speech and free speech. Yet even this question admits of multiple interpretations: How racist or homophobic are the comments – do they hit you over

the head or are they only offensive to those wielding a 'critical' lens? What exactly are the consequences for speech that people are worried about: some negative comments on social media or losing one's job and reputation? The answers to these qualifiers are likely to shift the balance of responses substantially.

The breakdown of answers will also be influenced by the early phrasing and tone of a question, which respondents anchor on. Thus, the question on pronouns is worded in such a way that opposing pronouns comes across as illiberal rather than 'live and let live'.

Having said this, the overall skew across 20 attitudinal questions in the data displayed in figure 4, as with the King's study, inclines against cultural leftism. Only on three questions (support for BLM, inclusion in history texts, support for people displaying pronouns) is there a slight majority for the cultural leftist position. However, on a fair number of the items, such as separating pupils by race into oppressors and oppressed or whether J.K. Rowling's publisher should drop her (both reflect real life events), there is overwhelming opposition. [12]

Figure 4: Attitudes to Culture War Questions (excludes Don't Know responses)

Note: excludes 'don't know' responses.

12. Rufo, Chris, 'Critical Race Theory in Education,' christopherrufo.com, April 27, 2021; Cowdrey, Katharine, 'Hachette moves to back Rowling after staff raise concerns,' *The Bookseller*, June 16, 2020

Culture War as a Wedge Issue

The pattern in the data in Figure 4 tilts over 2 to 1 against cultural leftism, but is 'cultural leftism' the correct way to describe support for restrictions on speech or historical symbols? I would argue in the affirmative, because left-right ideology is the strongest predictor of people's positions on these issues.

Figure 5 sets out the degree to which those who voted for right-wing parties (Tories, Brexit Party, Unionists) differ from those voting for left or liberal parties (Labour, Liberal Democrats, Greens, Scottish/Welsh/Irish nationalists). Across these 20 items, the average partisan difference is 25 points, a substantial gap.

The results are sorted in such a way that issues with the largest partisan gaps are at the top, and those with the strongest cross-party consensus appear at the bottom. Opposition to Black Lives Matter elicits the greatest partisan division, with 71 percent of right voters, but just 26 percent of left/liberal voters, opposed. This 45-point partisan gap is substantial, but less than the 70 to 80-point partisan divide on this question among Americans.[13]

Questions around whether Britain is racist, and whether this perspective should be taught to children, are among the most divisive, with partisan gaps of 35-40 points in Britain. In the US, the Republican-Democrat gap on whether to teach children that the country is racist is around 50 points, again somewhat higher than in Britain.
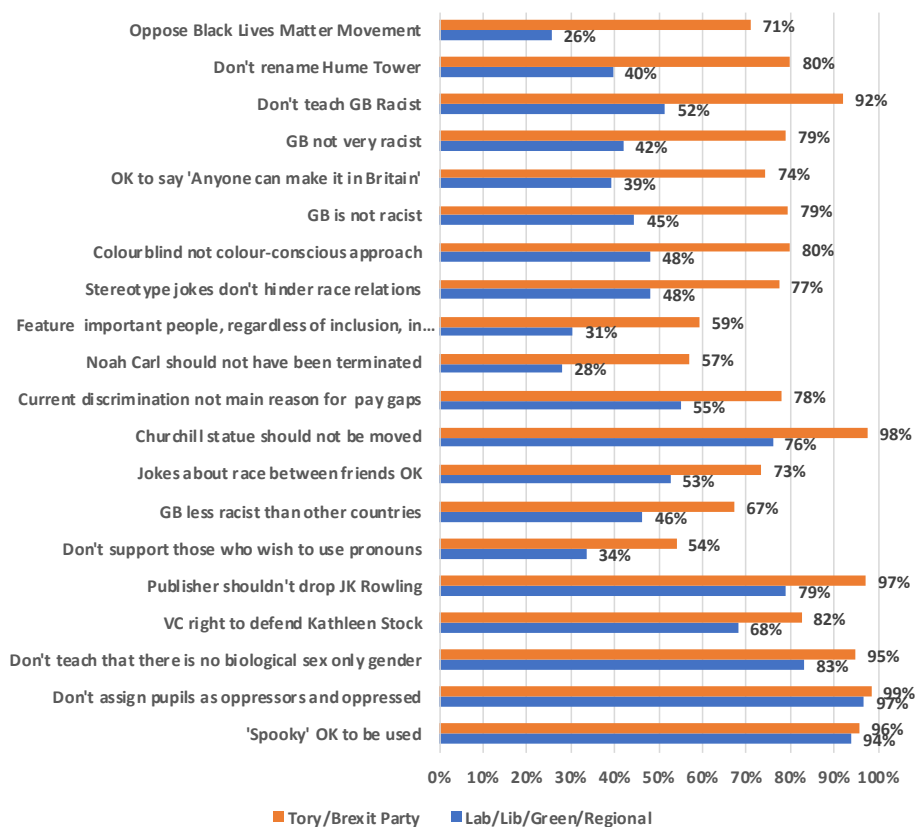
At the other end of the scale, there is near-unanimity that 'spooky' should be used, despite what some claim are its racist connotations. Similarly, nearly all respondents oppose the idea of separating schoolchildren on the basis of race and assigning whites as oppressors and minorities as oppressed. There is also virtually no support for teaching that there is no such thing as biological sex, only gender. When it comes to the cases of two prominent gender-critical feminists, Kathleen Stock and J.K. Rowling, support for them is very high, but those who vote for left and liberal parties are slightly more likely than right-wing voters to support punishing these figures for their speech.

In the US, there is a similar near-unanimity over not separating schoolchildren by race, but when it comes to teaching that there is no biological sex, only a minority of Democrats are opposed compared to 83 percent of British left/liberal party voters. This generates a US partisan gap of around 50 points compared to 12 points in Britain on this question. Still, this item is an outlier. Overall, the magnitude of the partisan gap on 'cancel culture' cases (Stock, Rowling, Carl) is 14-29 points in Britain,

13. Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture War in Contemporary America,' p. 47.

which is only slightly smaller than the 18-34 point partisan gap on an analogous set of cancel culture cases in the US. All told, Britain and America are more similar than different, even as partisan gaps are somewhat wider in America.

Figure 5: Attitudes to Culture War Issues, by 2019 Vote

Statement	Tory/Brexit Party	Lab/Lib/Green/Regional
Oppose Black Lives Matter Movement	71%	26%
Don't rename Hume Tower	80%	40%
Don't teach GB Racist	92%	52%
GB not very racist	79%	42%
OK to say 'Anyone can make it in Britain'	74%	39%
GB is not racist	79%	45%
Colourblind not colour-conscious approach	80%	48%
Stereotype jokes don't hinder race relations	77%	48%
Feature important people, regardless of inclusion, in…	59%	31%
Noah Carl should not have been terminated	57%	28%
Current discrimination not main reason for pay gaps	78%	55%
Churchill statue should not be moved	98%	76%
Jokes about race between friends OK	73%	53%
GB less racist than other countries	67%	46%
Don't support those who wish to use pronouns	54%	34%
Publisher shouldn't drop JK Rowling	97%	79%
VC right to defend Kathleen Stock	82%	68%
Don't teach that there is no biological sex only gender	95%	83%
Don't assign pupils as oppressors and oppressed	99%	97%
'Spooky' OK to be used	96%	94%

Note: these questions have 'don't know' options, thus it is not automatically the case that the obverse of the statements exhibit the same partisan gap.

While partisan splits are informative, it is also important to examine the relative exceptionalism of Britons who identify as far left. That is, who indicate they are 'very left wing' or 'fairly left wing' on a 7-point scale running from 'very left' to 'very right'. Since only 3.5 percent of people identify as 'very left' and 1.5 percent as 'very right', I include the extreme two categories as 'left', amounting to 17 percent of the survey sample, and 'right', 10.5 percent of the sample.
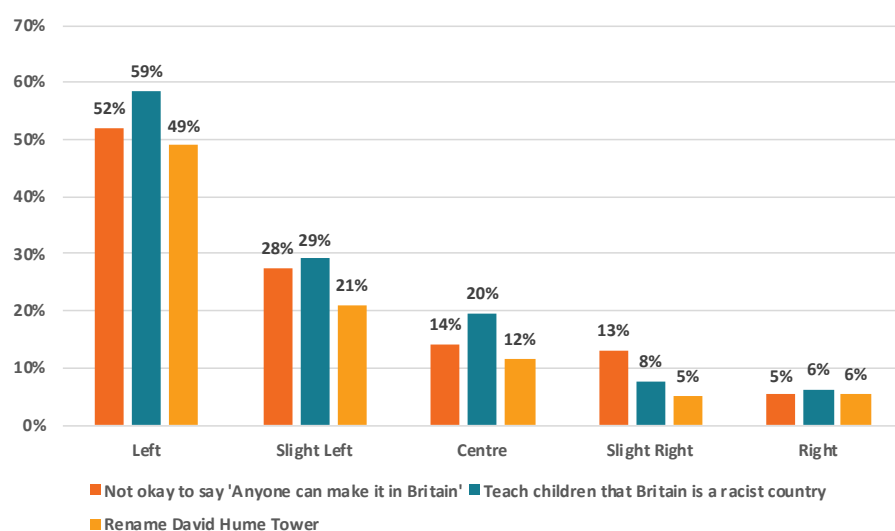
Figure 6 shows where these ideological groups stand on three issues that touch on race and can be seen as reflecting an applied 'Critical Race Theory' understanding of the world in which minorities are viewed as harmed, and the structural basis of racism denied, by symbols and phrases used in the mainstream culture.

What the chart reveals is that those on the left of the spectrum differ more from 'slight left' respondents than the slightly left differ from the

centre. The right, meanwhile, is closer to the centre of public opinion than the left. For instance, on the question of whether it is permissible to say 'Anyone can make it in Britain,' the gap between the left and slight left is 24 points (52 v 28) while the difference between the slight left and the centre is 14 points (28 v 14). The right differs from the centre by just 8 points (14 v 5).

The same is true for the Hume and 'teach Britain is racist' questions, and occurs across many of the 20 attitudinal questions in the data. More in Common's research likewise finds that the 13 percent 'Progressive Activist' segment of Britain stands apart from other left-leaning segments on many questions.[14] For instance, just 26 percent of Progressive Activists agree that PC is a problem in Britain compared to 68 to 71 percent of the other three left or centrist segments of public opinion.[15]

Figure 6: Ideological Differences on 'Critical Race Theory' Issues

Legend:
- Not okay to say 'Anyone can make it in Britain'
- Teach children that Britain is a racist country
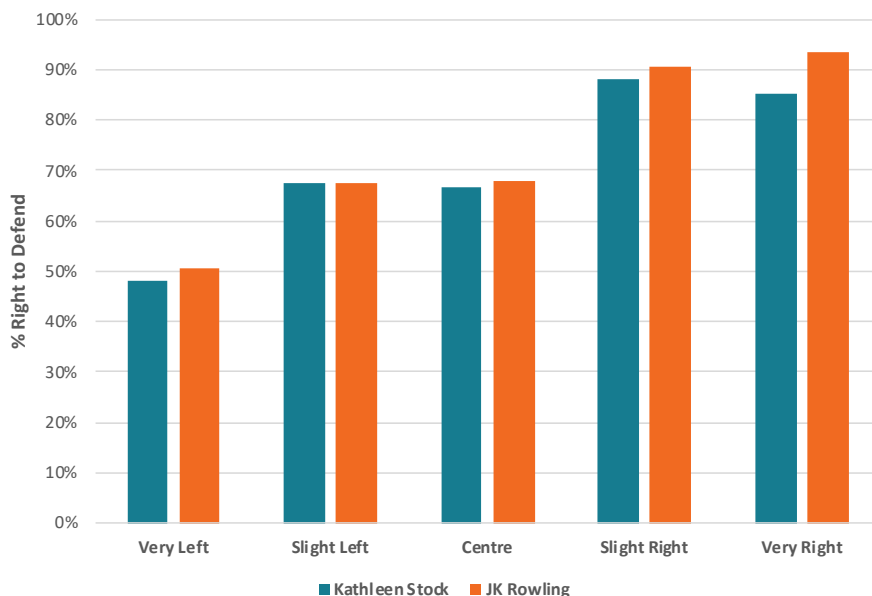- Rename David Hume Tower

Several questions were asked to respondents about a set of high-profile cancel culture controversies. In asking these questions, people were provided with a short introduction to the controversy in case they were unfamiliar with it. Thus one question asked, 'JK Rowling has faced criticism for her views toward transgender people and women's rights. From what you have seen or heard about this, do you think JK Rowling should or should not be dropped by her publishers?' For this item, and another involving the transgender issue – that of Kathleen Stock at Sussex University - Figure 7 shows that the left noticeably differs from the slightly left, which cleaves very close to the centre of public opinion on this question. The difference on these issues compared to the Critical Race Theory questions in Figure 8 is that right and left lie equidistant from the centre rather than right-wing respondents giving answers that lie closer to the centre of public opinion.

14. More in Common's study uses a wide range of representative survey data on social attitudes to create a typology of American and British voters.

15. Juan-Torres et. al., 'Britain's Choice,' p. 26.

Figure 7: Right to Defend Stock and Rowling? (by ideology)

Running statistical models for groups of questions shows that the ideological effects remain the most important predictor of where someone stands on culture war questions, even when controlling for race, age, gender, LGBT identification, education and social class.

In addition, for both trans issues and CRT-themed questions pertaining to race and history, the distance between the left and the 'slight left' of public opinion is generally greater than the distance between the slight left and the centre. The furthest left segment of British society, corresponding roughly to the 13 percent 'Progressive Activist' segment of public opinion identified by More in Common, thus stands apart from the mainstream of British society on culture war issues.

These models also affirm that there is one ideological pattern for an index of 6 transgender-themed questions in which right and left lie equidistant from the centre, and a second pattern for CRT-themed issues where the centre leans considerably closer to the right than the left.

Critical Race Theory vs. Cancel Culture

Another important pattern emerges from the statistical analysis, which is that left-right ideological differences are smaller for free speech questions such as whether Kathleen Stock or Noah Carl (who defended the right of race-IQ researchers to work though did not conduct such work himself) should lose their posts than on questions pertaining to the Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspective on history and society. Note that I use CRT to denote the position that Britain's past and its society are systemically racist.

For example, ideology predicts about 30 percent of the variation in people's feelings toward Black Lives Matter but only 4 percent of the variation in their views about whether the Sussex VC should have defended Kathleen Stock. On questions pertaining to Winston Churchill, David Hume, how racist Britain is or how much pride or shame should be taught in British history, ideology accounts for 17 to 30 percent of the variation in responses.

By comparison, on questions related to cancel culture cases such as Kathleen Stock, J.K. Rowling or Noah Carl, ideology only explains between 4 and 13 percent, generally only around half as much as is true for the Critical Race-oriented questions. Ideology is also less predictive of responses to questions pertaining to transgenderism than it is for questions around race and national history.

This pattern reflects my findings for the United States, which show that the partisan gap is twice as wide on CRT-themed questions than on issues concerning free speech cases like the firing of Google engineer James Damore or academic Charles Negy. I argue that the wider gap on CRT-based questions compared to free speech issues can be traced to distinct liberal and communitarian moral foundations. Leftists and conservatives don't differ as much on the moral foundation of liberty as they do on issues of respect and loyalty – especially as these pertain to their attachment to nation, religion or white majority ethnicity.[16] Hence threats to liberty, such as firing dissenters such as Kathleen Stock or Noah Carl, do not elicit the same partisan emotions as perceived threats to national tradition - such as removing Winston Churchill's statue or teaching children that Britain is a racist country.
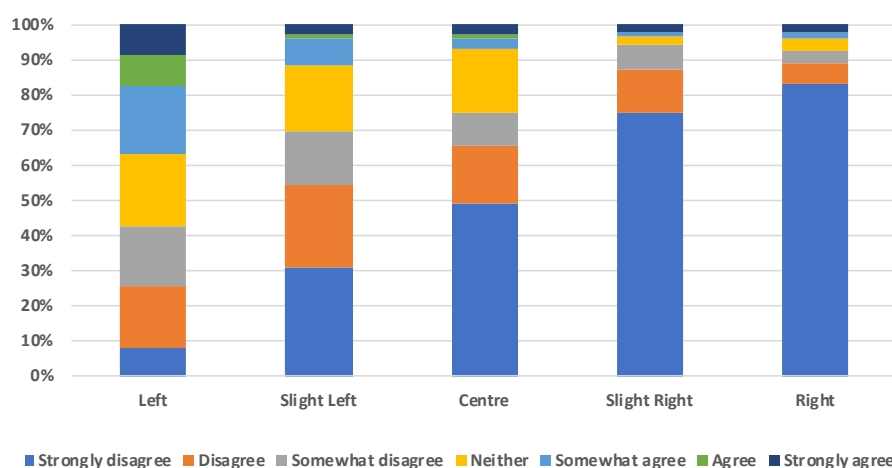
When it comes to CRT-themed issues, the strength of feeling on the right (i.e. cultural patriot) side contrasts with ambivalence on the left, creating a motivational asymmetry. Figure 8 examines the question of whether people think Winston Churchill's statue should be relocated from

16. Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture War in Contemporary America,' pp. 49-51.

Parliament Square to a museum because of racist things he said during his lifetime. The chart presents a detailed picture of how public opinion spreads across 7 response categories from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The findings reveal that about 80 percent of those who are slightly or very right-wing are 'strongly' opposed to Churchill being moved.

By contrast, those on the left are fragmented across all 7 categories, with a mere 9 percent strongly agreeing that Churchill should be moved. Even for questions that don't concern iconic national heroes, such renaming David Hume Tower or whether the phrase 'Anyone can make it in Britain' should be used, 6 in 10 on the right are strongly opposed to the cultural leftist position while a mere 8 to 15 percent of leftists are strongly in support.

Figure 8: Churchill's Statue Should be Moved

Note: excludes those who don't know their ideology. N=1,322.

The foregoing analysis finds the following:

a. There is around a 2 to 1 majority opposed to cultural leftist positions across most issues
b. Cultural leftist positions split the far left from the moderate left while uniting the right and centre.
c. Cultural leftist positions fragment leftist opinion while mobilising the right

What this means is that left-wing parties are not only in the position of having to defend relatively unpopular positions, but face the risk of dividing their voters while uniting the opposition. This makes culture war questions a potent wedge issue for right-of-centre politicians seeking to peel voters away from the left while motivating their own supporters to the polls.

The power of these issues has been demonstrated in American elections

such as that of Virginia, where Republican Glenn Youngkin flipped a state that went for Biden by more than 10 points in 2020 in part by campaigning for parents' rights and against Critical Race Theory in schools.[17] Hostility to cultural leftism, and to its quasi-religious variant known colloquially as wokeness, is now a pillar of Republican campaigning and is central to the appeal of politicians such as Republican presidential hopeful Florida's Ron De Santis.[18]

While some British Conservative politicians such as Kemi Badenoch, John Hayes and Oliver Dowden have made culture war appeals part of their brand, most have been wary of approaching these issues.[19] Badenoch suggests that this reticence has permitted radical cultural left positions such as gender-affirming care or teaching CRT to be rolled out across government departments, the NHS and in schools.[20] Though the British media gives these questions the same level of attention as the American media and public opinion divides in a very similar fashion on both sides of the Atlantic, issues such as CRT in schools that pit cultural leftists against cultural liberals and patriots have not featured as prominently in British politics as they have in the United States.[21]

17. Schneider, Gregory and Laura Vozzella, 'Va. Gov. Youngkin stirred the GOP base on critical race theory,' *Washington Post*, February 26, 2022

18. 'DeSantis signs 'Stop Woke Act,' Disney bills in Hialeah Gardens,' *Miami Herald*, 23 April 2022

19. Badenoch, Kemi, 'The Problem with Critical Race Theory,' *Spectator*, 24 October, 2020; Dathan, Matt, 'Woke ideology emboldens the West's enemies, says Oliver Dowden,' *Times*, February 15, 2022

20. Hazell, Will, 'Kemi Badenoch: Civil servants prevented me learning truth about Tavistock clinic,' *Telegraph*, 30 July 2022

21. Rozado, D. and E. Kaufmann (2022). "The Increasing Frequency of Terms Denoting Political Extremism in US and UK News Media." Social Sciences **11**(4): 167.

Younger People are More Culturally Socialist

Will cultural leftism fade because progressive illiberalism has been criticised in major media outlets such as *Harper's*, the *New York Times* or *Economist?*[22] Some aver that cancel culture and Critical Race Theory are temporary fads that will soon pass from the scene now that they are being scrutinised by the mainstream.

But an important argument against this view is that younger cohorts, notably Gen-Z (currently 18-25) and Millennials (aged 26-39), are more likely to believe in these ideas, and to carry them forth as they enter the workplace. With cohort change, the centre of gravity in organisations is likely to continue to shift in the direction of cultural leftism.

While these data cannot parse age from generational effects, previous work shows that the attitudes of younger people in the past tended to be more supportive of free speech. However, as Dennis Chong, Morris Levy and Jack Citrin show, well-educated Americans have, since around 2000, begun to turn away from supporting free speech that is deemed offensive to racial and sexual minorities and women.[23] Others find that cultural absolutism has come to replace cultural relativism as a dominant mode among well-educated young people.[24] One study, for instance, found that 7 in 10 American undergraduates surveyed said that a professor who said something students find offensive should be reported to the authorities.[25] In Britain, a recent study shows a big increase in student intolerance between 2016 and 2022, with 36 percent of students saying an academic should be fired if they offend 'some' students in class and just 33 percent opposed. 61 percent prioritise anti-discrimination over unrestricted free speech while a mere 17 percent back free speech.[26]

A major trend that emerged in my analysis of American data, and of the views of academics in North America and Britain, is that younger people are more supportive of speech restrictions and CRT perspectives than older people, even when controlling for ideology and socio-demographic characteristics.[27]

The same is true in Britain. Figure 9 presents a statistical model which predicts opinion based on the most powerful underlying latent variable from 25 attitude questions in the survey. Ideology is the most important predictor of this common factor, but age comes second, with a standardised effect of nearly 0.2, similar to what I found in America.

22. 'A Letter on Justice and Open Debate,' *Harper's*, 7 July 2020; 'The threat from the illiberal left,' *Economist*, 4 September 2021; 'America Has a Free Speech Problem,' *New York Times*, 18 March 2022.

23. Chong, D., et al. (2021). "The Realignment of Political Tolerance in the United States." Available at SSRN 3951377.
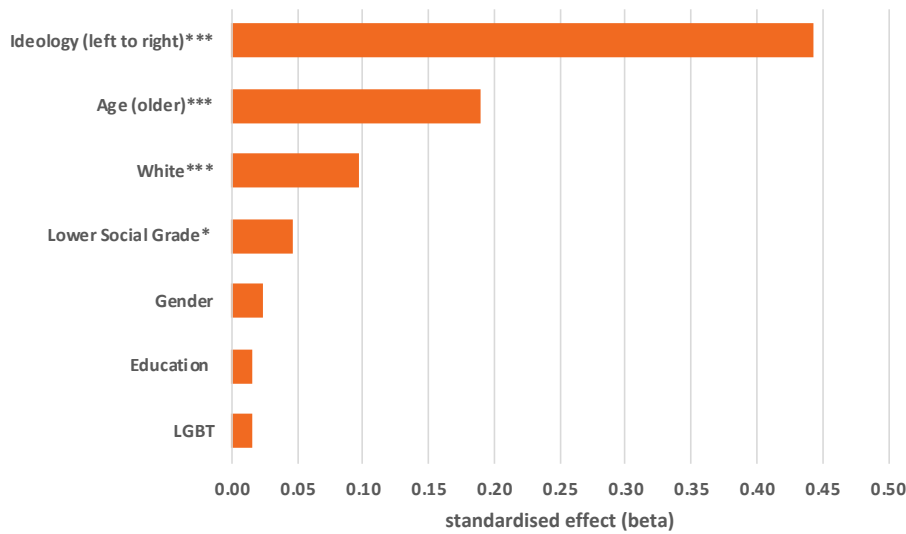
24. Broćić, M. and A. Miles (2021). "College and the "culture war": assessing higher education's influence on moral attitudes." American Sociological Review **86**(5): 856-895.

25. Bitzan, John and Clay Routledge, *2021 American College Student Freedom, Progress and Flourishing Survey*, Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth, p. 13.

26. Hillman, Nick, "'You can't say that!': What students really think of free speech on campus', HEPI report no 35, June 2022

27. Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America,' pp. 2, 16-18

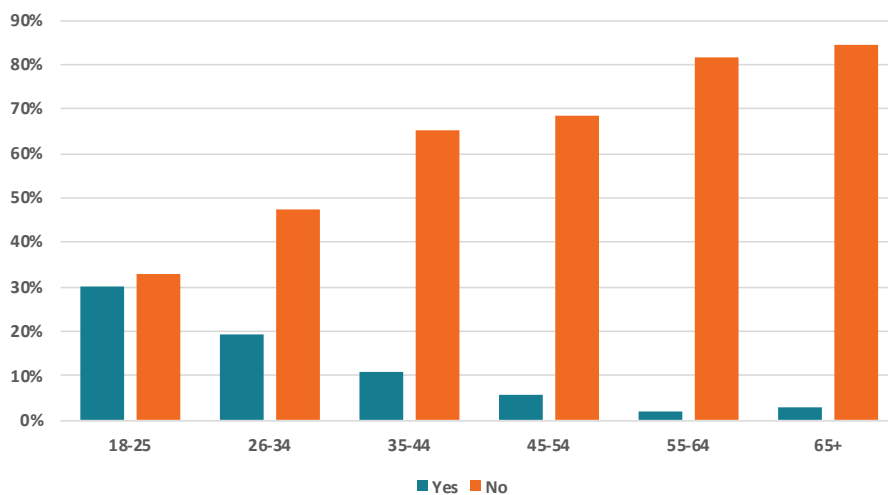## Figure 9: Predictors of Opposition to Cultural leftism (25 Questions)

Excludes those who do not know their ideology. R2=.316, N=1,322.

Young people in Britain, as in America, depart more from older people on questions regarding the boundaries between freedom of speech and giving offence. The one exception is on whether jokes between friends that embody racial stereotypes are permissible, and whether they help or hinder inter-group relations, where there are limited age differences. However, large statistically-significant gaps emerge on most other attitudes.
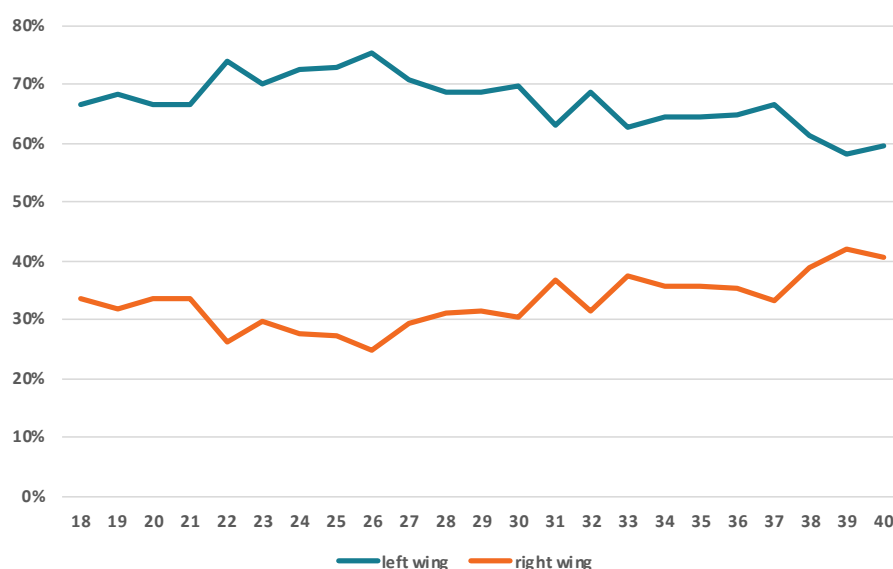
This is especially true for the transgender issue. Figure 10 examines opinion on whether J.K. Rowling should be dropped by her publishers. Views split fairly evenly among the 18-25s, but break sharply in favour of Rowling as we move up the age distribution. By the time we reach the 35-44 bracket, opinion trends 65-11 in favour of Rowling, to say nothing of older age groups.

Figure 10: Should JK Rowling be Dropped by Publishers? (by age)

Could this be an artefact of young people being more left-wing? No. Figure 11, drawn from YouGov's giant Profiles dataset, contains thousands of observations for each single age. Those who don't have an ideology are excluded, but the share does not differ systematically by age between 18 and the mid-30s. Results indicate that Britons between the ages of 22 and 30 are the most left-wing. 18 to 21 year olds are somewhat more conservative, perhaps because they came to political maturity after the Brexit referendum. They have a similar 2 to 1 left-to-right ideological split as respondents in their mid-thirties. Be that as it may, the youngest Britons are more culturally socialist than the 26-34 group, whom they resemble ideologically.
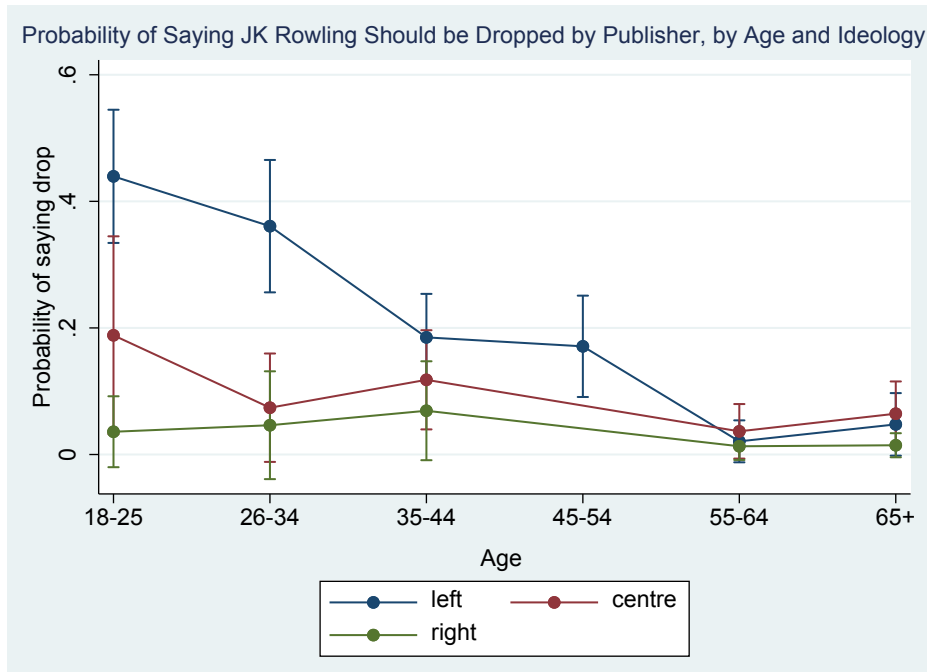
Figure 11: Left-Right Identification, by Age

Source: YouGov Profiles, 15 June, 2022. N=52,140 excluding missing, centrist and don't know responses.

To get a sense of how age and ideology interact, I model support for J.K. Rowling's publisher dropping her for her views. Results in Figure 12 control for race, sexual orientation, gender, social class and education. Despite a certain amount of fluctuation in the lines due to limited sample size, results show that the biggest age differences are among left-wing respondents. Leftists 55 and over support Rowling's free speech at the same rates as centrists and conservatives their age. Younger centrists and conservatives don't differ much from older centrists and conservatives. The big gap is between young and old leftists. A left-wing person aged 18 to 25 has a .43 chance of saying Rowling should be dropped compared to a .03 chance for a leftist aged 55 or over.

Figure 12

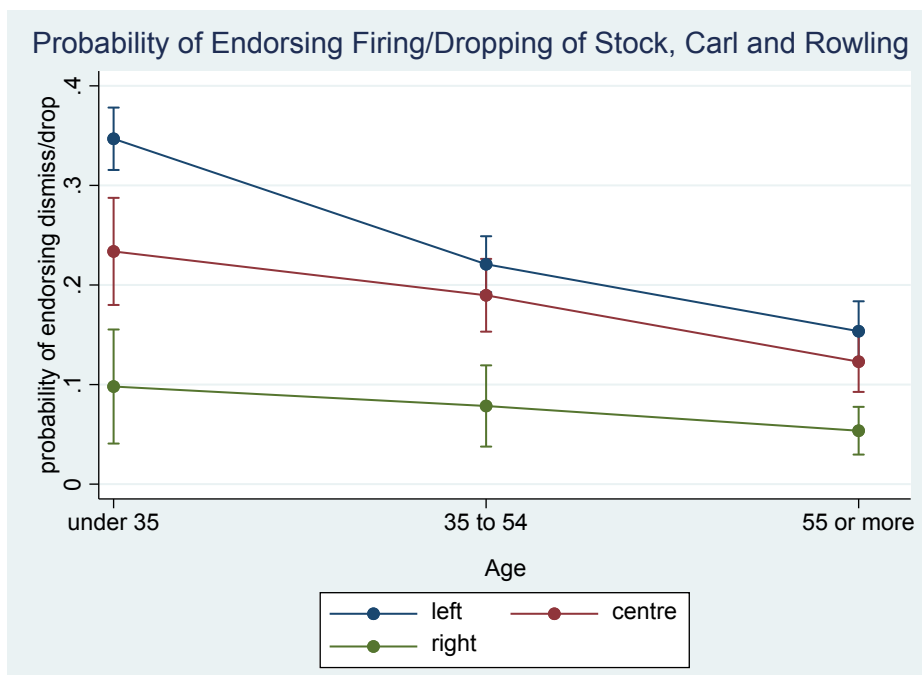Probability of Saying JK Rowling Should be Dropped by Publisher, by Age and Ideology

N=1,224, Pseudo-R2=.279.

A smoothed result appears when I amalgamate responses across the cases of Stock, Carl and Rowling (each coded 1 for approval of cancellation and 0 for disapproval or don't know) and divide by three to produce an index from 0 to 1. I also compress age bands from 6 to 3 to limit data noise. This yields the statistical model in Figure 13. It predicts the average number of times a person endorses the 'cancel' option across the three examples. The maximum score would be 1 for someone who opted to dismiss or drop in all three cases.

Those under 35, regardless of ideology, are somewhat more likely to endorse dismissal or dropping than older age bands. The age effect is most pronounced for the left, moderate for centrists and weakest for those on the right. However, the only statistically-significant interaction effect is for leftists under age 35, as indicated by the uptick in the blue line at the top left of the chart. This is the group that is most invested in the cultural leftism which underpins the lion's share of cancel culture incidents in Britain.

Leftists under 35 are thereby twice as likely to endorse cancellation in these three cases as leftists 55 and over. The average leftist under 35 endorses around one cancellation out of a possible three (Stock, Carl or Rowling), for a predicted support for cancellation of .35. This compares to the typical centrist under 35 favouring three-fourths of a cancellation out of a possible three (.23) and average young conservative backing dismissal/dropping at a rate of less than a third of a cancellation out of a possible three (.10). In effect, both ideology and age matter for supporting cancel culture, but the interaction of being left-wing and a Zoomer or Millennial produces an extra degree of progressive illiberalism.

Figure 13

Probability of Endorsing Firing/Dropping of Stock, Carl and Rowling

R2=.202, N=1,322. Interaction for under 35 x left is significant at p<.05 level.

The collision between cultural leftism and cultural patriotism reveals a similar pattern as the above tension between cultural leftism and cultural liberalism, albeit with the difference that battles over history or the balance of pride and shame in the nation are more ideologically-driven. Figure 14 models how age and ideology shape people's scores on an index composed of three questions: whether Churchill's statue should be moved, whether Hume Tower should be renamed, and whether nations should spend more time focusing on their failures than their positives.

Figure 14 resembles Figure 13 in that both young and left-wing people are more likely to favour the cultural leftist position. Leftists under 35 are again an outlier compared to young centrists and conservatives, or older leftists. Yet there is also an important difference. In the cancel culture graph, the gap between left and right rises from around 10 points in the 55-plus age group to 25 points for the under-35s.

However, in the more CRT-themed graph concerning treatment of the past in Figure 14, the gap between left and right starts at 26 points among the 55-plus group, a full 16 points more than with the Stock-Carl-Rowling cancel culture index. It then widens to 38 points among the under-35s. Young leftists once again stand out as most supportive of cultural leftism, but the crude gap between the blue and green ideological lines is much larger when it comes to people's view on the past. This is reflected in the predictive power of the overall model, which is .202 for the cancel culture model and .297 for the historical model. Even older leftists adopt a relatively critical approach to the national past.

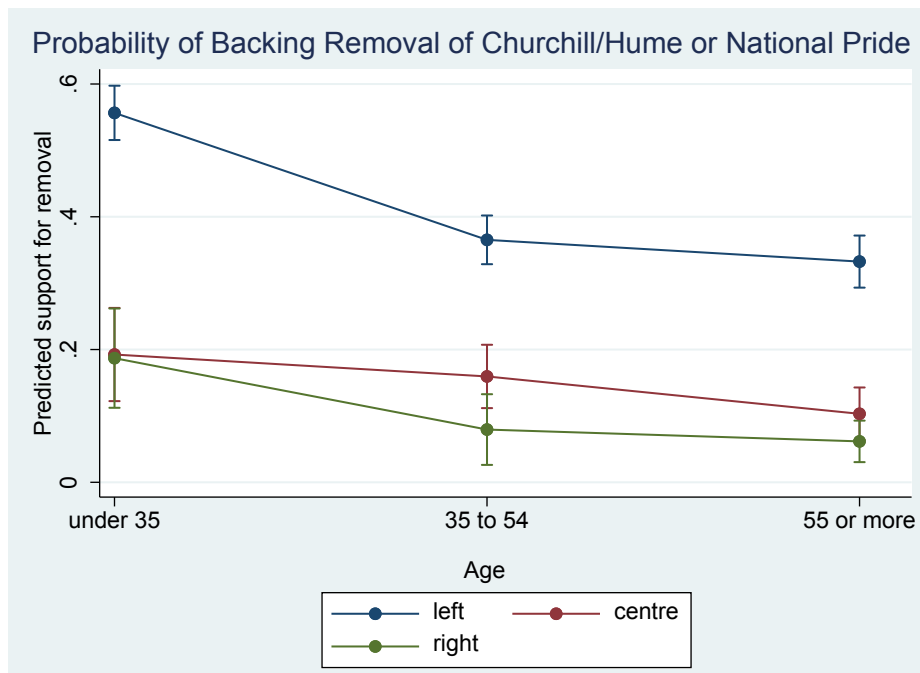In relative terms, this means that age is as or more important as ideology

for explaining a person's position on cancel culture whereas when it comes to 'critical' approaches to history and memory – often subsumed under the rubric of applied Critical Race Theory – ideology is much more important than age. This said, the total effect of being younger on attitudes is relatively similar for both cancel culture and CRT-based questions.

The last point to note here is that the ideological centre is close to the right on questions of national identity whereas on cancel culture the left is closer to the centre among older people and equidistant from the right among the under-35s. This last point should be qualified, however, insofar as only a small minority (averaging 10 to 20 percent) support cancellation in the case of Stock, Rowling and Carl, so the majority position among all ideological groups does not back cancel culture.

In terms of other factors that predict attitudes to the removal of historical figures and national pride narratives, Leave voting is most important. Even with controls for left-right ideology, Leavers are far less likely to support historical revision or removal than Remain voters. They are also significantly less inclined to endorse cancelling Stock, Carl and Rowling than are Remainers.

Finally, those who live in wards (i.e. neighbourhoods) with a larger share of people who identify as English rather than British are more likely to oppose historical revisionism (but not more likely to oppose the cancelling of Stock, Carl or Rowling). The share of minorities, highly qualified or educated people, or the rurality of a person's ward of residence had no significant effect on these outcomes.

Figure 14

Probability of Backing Removal of Churchill/Hume or National Pride

R2=.297, N=1,322. Interaction for under 35 x left is significant at p<.01 level.

The point about national history deserves somewhat closer scrutiny. Ultimately, the critical approach to the past based on the Critical Social Justice (CSJ) approach takes an oppositional stance toward the nation's history and the structure of national society. The CRT subcomponent of CSJ prioritises criticising national history and society over emphasising pride in a country's achievements. Nevertheless, against the critical approach of CRT and academia more generally, most people in fact prioritise pride even as they remain open to criticism of the nation.

Thus respondents were asked, 'Which of the following comes closer to your view:

1. Nations should admit their errors but emphasise the positives about their past rather than dwelling on past misdeeds
2. Nations should recognise that there are positives in their past but spend more time thinking about where they have failed to treat people equally in the past '

51 percent of people favoured option 1, 32 percent option 2, with 17 percent undecided, indicating a 5:3 tilt in favour of emphasising the positive.

In a similar vein, people were asked, 'What do you think should be the balance of pride and shame in Britain's history that should be taught in schools, from 0 (complete shame) to 100 (complete pride)?' The mean score was 60 out of 100, indicating that people prefer a national narrative in schools that emphasises pride over shame, even as they believe that shameful episodes also deserve some attention. Those under 30 (51/100), nonwhites (53), LGBT people (53) and women (58) all came out in favour of pride over shame.

When asked if Britain is a racist country, people rejected this 59-41. By a 44-37 margin most thought Britain was less racist than other countries rather than more (8%) or as (29%) racist. Nonwhite respondents agreed that Britain was less racist than other countries, albeit with a somewhat slimmer margin (39% less racist vs. 36% more or equally racist), and with 50.3 percent saying Britain was not a racist society and 49.7 percent saying it was.

The upshot of these questions suggests that while people think criticism of the nation is important, they place more emphasis on pride and positive stories. This is a very different mindset to the almost entirely 'critical' lens applied in academia and among CRT-influenced practitioners of diversity training in organisations, whether the public sector or large corporations. It may be that the job of academics is to be critical, but if this is the case, distance must be placed between academic perspectives on history and views taught to schoolchildren - where national pride is an important ingredient in building social cohesion. Academic history texts which reflect the critical norms of academe are thereby not appropriate for use in schools unless leavened by an emphasis on national achievements.

Freedom of Speech

How free are members of the British public to speak their minds about their political affiliations and beliefs? As Figure 15 shows, all is not well with expressive freedom in Britain.

Fully one quarter worried about losing their job or reputation for speech being misunderstood or taken out of context, or for online posts from the past being revealed. Of the two, people were much more concerned about their words being misinterpreted (19-20%) than previous posts being revealed (6-8%). This is a significant level of concern, albeit around 10 points lower than the approximately 30-40 percent level recorded in three American surveys.[28]

More generally, 41 percent of people said they felt less free to express their views on immigration than five years ago, very similar to the results of a 2021 UK survey.[29] 54 percent said the current political climate prevents them from expressing their beliefs because 'others may find them offensive' and fully two-thirds said they thought political correctness had 'gone too far.' This compares to previous work which found that 72 percent of the British public thought PC 'is a problem in our country' (2020) or the 76 percent who, in 2019, said PC 'sometimes goes too far and exceeds common sense.'[30]

American data using the same questions as my British YouGov survey again shows about 10 points higher concern, with 62-64 percent of Americans saying that the current climate prevents them from expressing their views, and 74-80 percent saying PC has gone too far.[31]

While 60 percent of my survey respondents said a Remain supporter would freely share their beliefs at work, 8 percent said they wouldn't and 32 percent were unsure. Meanwhile, just 43 percent of respondents said they thought a Leaver would share their views at work, with 18 percent saying a Leaver would not and 39 percent unsure, for a total of 57 percent who did not think a Leaver would share their views. These figures indicate a considerable degree of concern or uncertainty about expressing deeply-held political beliefs due to peer pressure. Other findings suggest that reticence is highest at work, compared to in the home or among friends.[32]

US results indicate that 24 percent of people think Trump supporters would not share their views at work, which is 8 points higher than the 18 percent share of UK respondents who say Leavers would not share their views at work. Though sampling could account for the difference, this intimates once more that there is a somewhat higher level of speech constraint in the US compared to Britain.

28. Kaufmann, Eric, 'The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America,' *Manhattan Institute*, January 25, 2022; Elkins, Emily. 2020. "Poll: 62% of Americans Say They Have Political Views They're Afraid to Share." *Cato Institute.* Available at https://www.cato.org/publications/survey-reports/poll-62-americans-say-they-have-political-views-they-re-afraid-share; Harvard-Harris April 2021 National Poll.
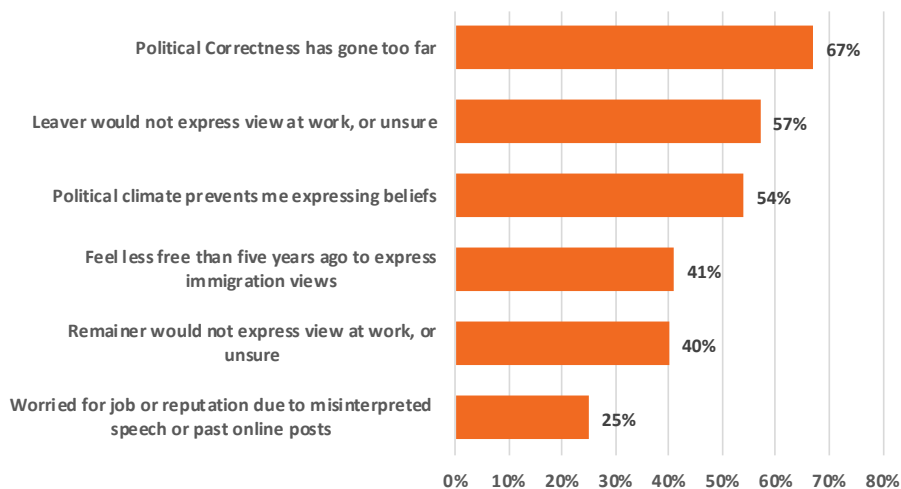
29. Hope, Christopher, 'Freedom of speech in UK 'under threat' say half of Britons in cancel culture poll,' *Telegraph*, 13 February, 2021

30. Juan-Torres, M., T. Dixon and A. Kimaram, 'Britain's Choice: common ground and division in 2020s Britain,' *More in Common*, October 2020; Gaston, Sophia, 'Outrage, Offence and Common Sense,' *Opinium*, August 2019;

31. Hawkins, S., et al. (2018). "Hidden tribes: A study of America's polarized landscape," p. 98; Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America'

32. Hope, 'Freedom of speech in UK 'under threat'

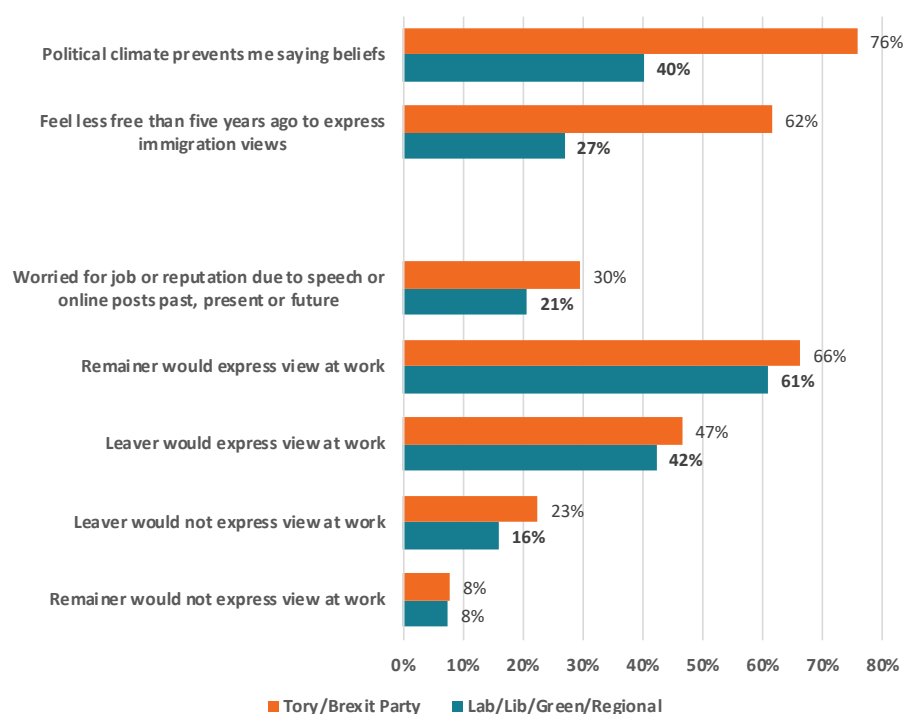**Figure 15: Freedom of Expression Indicators**

Source: YouGov, 9 May 2022. N=1,818. For Leave and Remain questions, N=615 and 626, respectively. Data weights applied.

Perceptions of how free Britain's speech climate is vary considerably by ideology, with Brexit supporters and the highly correlated measure of 2019 Conservative or Brexit Party voters both recording less expressive freedom than Remain or left/liberal party voters. Figure 16 shows that right party voters are nearly 40 points more likely than others to say that PC has gone too far, 36 points more likely to say they cannot express their beliefs for fear of giving offense, and 35 points more likely to say they feel less free to share their views on immigration than five years ago. Right party voters are also 9 points more likely than left or liberal voters to say they are worried about losing their job or reputation for speech or past online posts. There are few partisan differences when it comes to assessing how free Leavers or Remainers are to express their views at work. Both Leave and Remain voters, on average, tend to agree that Leavers feel less free to express their views.

While these are significant political differences, it is also worth noting the considerable pool of concern among left/liberal voters, with 21 percent worrying about losing their job or reputation for speech, 40 percent saying the current climate prevents them expressing their beliefs for fear of offense, and 53 percent agreeing that PC has gone too far.

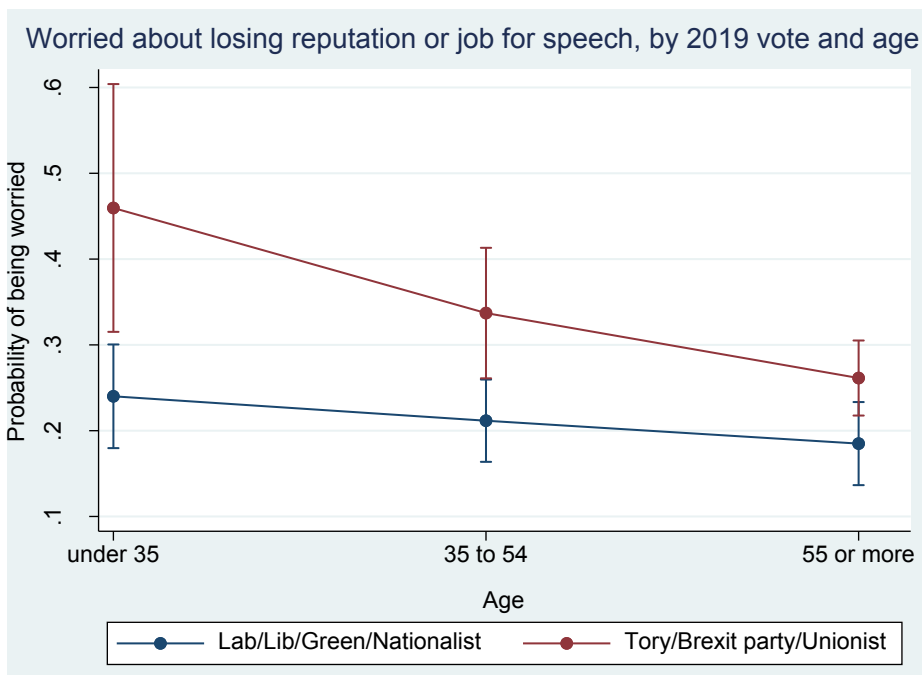## Figure 16: Perception of Expressive Freedom, by 2019 Vote

While fear of losing one's reputation or job for speech differs by just 9 points between left-liberal and right party supporters, the partisan gap in chilling effects is wider among young people. For example, 58 percent of right party supporters aged 18 to 25 worry about losing their job or reputation for speech compared to 26 percent of right party supporters over 55. The relationship, controlling for race, gender, sexual orientation, education, income and work status, is shown in Figure 17. A Conservative or Brexit Party voter 35 and under has a .46 chance of being worried about losing their job or reputation for speech compared to a .24 chance for a left-liberal voter under age 35 and a .26 chance for a Conservative/ Brexit Party voter aged 55 and over.

Young conservatives feel the chill of cancel culture more than any other demographic. This worry is concentrated on concern over reputation more than job loss, and is similar between those with degrees and those without. This suggests that peer pressure and social media, more than institutional sanctions, are top of the mind for those who feel the loss of expressive freedom most keenly. This exemplifies what Francis Fukuyama refers to as the erosion of citizens' 'zone of privacy' by social media activists and malicious individuals, resulting in the loss of a fundamental liberty in an open society.[33]

33. Fukuyama, F. (2022). Liberalism and its discontents, Profile Books, p. 105.

Figure 17

Worried about losing reputation or job for speech, by 2019 vote and age

Pseudo-R2=.024; N=1,368. Interaction between age and party is not significant at p<.05 level, but separate models for right and left voters show that age is significant at p<.01 for right voters and not significant for left voters, with coefficient three times larger for right than left.

Workplace segregation

Peer pressure, expressed in organisations or publicly via social media, is arguably the main driver of speech restrictions in modern society. This necessitates a discussion of political composition of workplaces, political discrimination and how this creates a fearful atmosphere which constrains points of view that dissent from orthodoxy or fail to conform to majority norms.[34] My previous work on the partisan balance and political discrimination in British and North American universities indicates that these political pressures can be severe, with a majority of right-leaning academics in social science and humanities departments of universities self-censoring their beliefs in the UK, Canada and the United States.[35]

While assessments of the political composition of workplace departments are based on what people subjectively think, prior assessments are often a fairly close match with reality. For instance, among academics, I find that self-assessed ideology and perceived department ideology are very closely aligned.[36]

What of the situation off-campus? Figure 18 shows that nearly 7 in 10 Remainers surveyed said they work in departments where the median employee is a Remainer. By contrast, just 3 in 10 Leavers said they worked in Leave-dominated workplaces. A clear majority – 64 percent – of those without a view on Brexit were unsure of the political colouring at work.

These numbers show that there is considerable workplace segregation in Britain. However, whereas in the US we find a symmetrical picture in which nearly 6 in 10 of both Republicans and Democrats work in places dominated by their own tribe, the figures in Britain show a pronounced asymmetry, with a significant Remain tilt. While fewer than 2 in 10 Leavers work in Remain-dominated organisations, little different from the 2 in 10 Republicans in the US who work in Democratic workplaces, 5 in 10 Leavers report their workplaces as neutral, or say they don't know what they are. It is likely that many of the workers that Leavers perceive as neutral, or whose colouring they don't know, are in fact Leave voters.

The asymmetry seems to be even more extreme among university-educated employees: 77 percent of university-educated Remainers work in Remain-leaning places, and only 4 percent in Leave-leaning departments. For graduate Remainers under 40, the slant is 83-4. Assuming that perceptions are reasonably accurate, this represents a high degree of political segregation for graduate Remainers.

Both education level and Brexit position predict workplace politics. Thus graduate Leavers work in places that are 29 percent Leave-dominated, 26 percent Remain-dominated and 46 percent other. For non-graduate
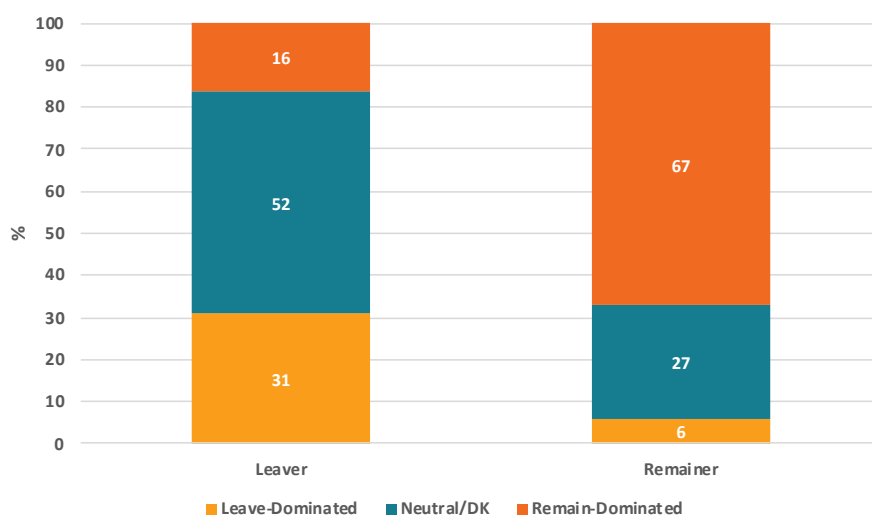
34. Sunstein, C. R. (2019). Conformity: the power of social influences, NYU Press.

35. Kaufmann, Eric. 2021. 'Academic Freedom in Crisis: Punishment, Political Discrimination, and Self-Censorship,' Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (CSPI), March 1; Adekoya et. al. 'Academic Freedom in the UK', Policy Exchange, August 3, 2020

36. Ibid.

Leavers, 33 percent work in Leave-dominated workplaces, against just 11 percent in Remain-dominated departments, with 57 percent saying their workplaces are neutral or that they don't know. Older and poorer workers are more likely to be in Leave workplaces than younger and wealthier workers, even when taking account of an individual's Brexit vote, ideology and education level.

Figure 18: Workplace Slant for Leavers and Remainers

N= 413 Remainers, 319 Leavers. Note: includes employees only. Leavers exceed Remainers among retired and other non-employees in the sample.

Since the UK divides roughly 50-50, and this survey reflects that in its weighting, we would expect people's workplaces to show an even mix of Brexit views. In the US, I found the reported mix of Democrats and Republicans at work to be relatively balanced (40% v 36%), with 56 percent of Trump voters working in places they identified as majority Republican. Trump voters tended to work in smaller organizations, and in relatively rural areas. British data do not, however, show much difference in organisation size or population density of ward of residence between Leave and Remain voters.

The British figures show a much larger share of people describing their workplace as neutral or don't know (43%) than in the US (26%). The share of people saying they weren't sure if a Leaver or Remainer would feel free to share their views is also 10 points higher in the UK compared to the US, where more people had a view on whether a Democrat or Republican would be open about their views.

But this still leaves the relatively Remain skew in the data difficult to explain. This result could arise because Remain supporters are more vocal and Leavers more 'shy', which could lead people to overestimate the proportion of Remainers at work while underestimating the number of Leavers. On the other hand, the fact 4 in 10 Leavers working in Remain-leaning workplaces say a Leaver would be willing to share their political

beliefs at work indicates that shyness explains only part of what is going on. The more balanced US data are unlikely to be the result of less right-wing shyness because fewer than 3 in 10 Trump supporters working in Democratic-leaning workplaces said they would share their views, which makes them 'shier' than the 4 in 10 Brexit voters in Remain workplaces willing to voice their political beliefs to colleagues.

It is possible the results could reflect sampling issues, despite YouGov's established methodology. However other survey work I have conducted on the Prolific platform reports the same results as this YouGov survey.

In Britain there seems to be a considerably larger number of people who don't know the political hue of their colleagues than is true in the US. This is especially the case for Leave voters, which other surveys find to include a substantial group of people who have a weak interest in politics.[37] Leavers with a stronger political commitment seem to be able to identify their workplace composition more, and this brings out more Leavers.

Thus for the 192 Leavers with a political attention score of more than 6 on a 1-11 scale, 37 percent say they work in a Leave workplace and 44 percent that their work is neutral or don't know. For the 85 Leavers scoring below 6 for political attention, their average workplace was listed as 18 percent Leave-leaning and 67 percent neutral or don't know. Among the 23 Leavers who report posting political content on Twitter, 65 percent say they work in Leave-majority workplaces while just 18 percent say their workplace is neutral or don't know. For the 47 Leavers who say they posted political content on Facebook, 49 percent work in Leave-majority places and 31 percent in departments they believe are mixed on the EU referendum, or whose political cast they don't know. Those Leavers who identify their political ideology as right-wing work in places that lean 39 percent Leave versus 37 percent neutral/don't know.

These numbers indicate that stronger political attention and commitment among Leavers may lead them to perceive their organisations as more Leave-leaning than Leavers who are less attuned to politics. The Leave-Remain asymmetry could partially be explained by the fact that Remainers are more likely to actively follow politics and voice their opinions, thus punching above their weight in providing the political cues that establish a workplace atmosphere.

In addition, Leave-leaning workplaces in Britain may be quieter or harder to detect than Remain-leaning ones or Republican-leaning ones in America. This ambiguity could conceal many Brexit supporters in organisations which manifest few of the cues that would allow them to be politically identified. This may be less the case with Republican-slanted workplaces in America where cues such as American flags or vehicle types may be more prominently displayed. In addition, some may read certain workplaces as more Remain-leaning than they actually are, perhaps because of elite messaging within organisations. This said, political asymmetry in British workplaces is a puzzle which begs further investigation.
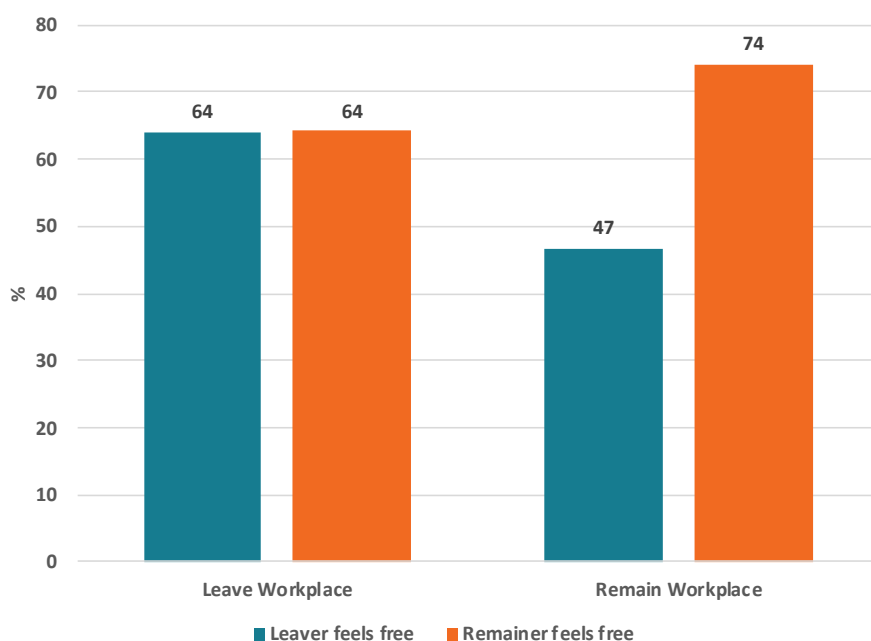
37. For instance, see Understanding Society's Brexit panel (wave 7-8), where those least interested in politics were 15 points more likely to support Leave than those most interested in politics. See https://www.understanding-society.ac.uk/.

Impact of Workplace Composition on Self-Censorship

What these results suggest is that Remainers, especially those with degrees, are heavily insulated from Leave environments and tend to perceive themselves to be in politically supportive environments while Leavers are more exposed to ambiguous or Remain environments. Does this mean Leavers are less free, self-censoring their views? As Figure 19 shows, in Leave-dominated workplaces, Remainers and Leavers feel equally free, but in Remain-dominated workspaces, 30 percentage point more Remainers feel the freedom to express their views than Leavers (74 vs. 47).

On the other side of the ledger, respondents working in Remain-leaning workplaces (includes Leavers, Neutrals and Remainers) are about 10 points more likely to say a Remainer would feel free to share their views at work than respondents in Leave-leaning workplaces (74 to 64). They are also 17 points less likely than a respondent in a Leave-leaning workplace to say that a Leaver would feel free to share their views at work.

Figure 19: Workplace Freedom to Share Brexit Beliefs, by Workplace Lean

Overall, the survey shows that 42 percent of people think a Leaver would express their views to colleagues and 60 percent say a Remainer would do
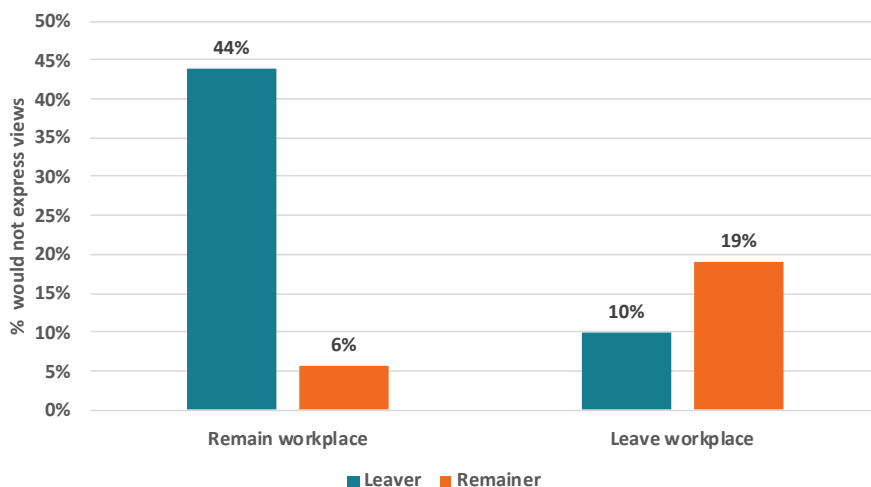
likewise, an 18-point political asymmetry. This is somewhat similar to the US, where in 2020, 52 percent of survey respondents thought a Trump voter would share their views at work compared to 65 percent who said the same for Biden voters, a 13-point asymmetry.

As noted above, the speech-suppressing effect of workplace partisanship is stronger in the US, so why is the American political gap smaller? Largely because the ratio of perceived Republican to Democrat workplaces is much more even in the US than is the ratio of perceived Leave to Remain workplaces in the UK. Thus the free speech problem for Leavers arises from a combination of few politically-congenial environments and a modest speech-suppression effect in Remain workplaces.

Leavers in Remain-dominated workplaces, like Republicans in Democratic-dominated workplaces in America, perceive greater speech restrictions than their Remainer colleagues in the same category of workplace. For instance, 44 percent of Leavers working in Remain workplaces say a Leaver would not feel free to express their views whereas only 13 percent of Remain voters in Remain-leaning workplaces think a Leaver would not feel free to express their political beliefs. There is an asymmetry the other way as well, but it is more modest: just 10 percent of Leavers in Leave-dominated workplaces say a Remainer would not feel free to express their views compared to 19 percent of Remainers working in Leave-dominated workplaces saying this.

Figure 20 compares how Leave and Remain employees perceive the climate in workplaces dominated by the other side. In Remain workplaces, 44 percent of Leavers would not share their view with colleagues compared to 6 percent of Remainers, a 38-point difference in freedom. In contrast, Leave-dominated workplaces have a more even level of political freedom, with 19 percent of Remainers feeling unable to express their political beliefs at work compared to 10 percent of Leavers, a gap of 9 points. In a statistical model, with controls for age, education, income, social class, ideology, gender and sexual orientation, only the interaction between being a Leave voter in a Remain workplace significantly predicts feeling that one's own side would not express its views at work. When we put this together with the fact that more workplaces are perceived as Remain-leaning than Leave-leaning, this adds up to a significantly higher loss of freedom for Leavers than for Remainers.

Figure 20: Say own Brexit group would not express views at work

The degree to which Leavers perceive a hostile environment in Remain work environments preventing them from bringing their political selves to work is a substantial 44 percent. Nevertheless, the impact of being in a work environment dominated by the other political tribe appears to be greater in America: a Republican in a Democratic-dominated workplace feels 46 points less free to share their views than a Republican in a Republican-dominated workplace (this 46-point difference compares to a 34-point gap for Leavers in Britain working in Remain versus Leave workplaces, as noted in Figure 20). For Democrats, the difference was 23 points (versus 9 points for Remainers in contrasting political environments in Britain). In Britain, there is a statistically-significant speech-suppressing effect on Leavers of being in a workplace dominated by Remainers, but the impact is not quite as large as in America.

Do We All Live on Campus Now?

Andrew Sullivan observed that campus intolerance has begun to spread to other parts of the economy, suggesting that 'we all live on campus now.'[38] This observation has been shown to be partly true, with 36 percent of Americans and 25 percent of Britons concerned for their jobs and reputations, and just 3 in 10 Republicans and 4 in 10 Leave voters feeling free to share their beliefs in workplaces dominated by the other political stripe.

Notwithstanding these observations, in both the US and Britain, campus-based illiberalism is far stronger than in organisations off-campus. Thus the overall level of speech-suppression of the political right experienced in the wider workforce is under 20 points in both countries compared to 60-80 points among Social Science and Humanities (SSH) academics.[39]

In Britain, for example, the share of Leave-supporting SSH academics who say a Leave voter would feel free to share their views with colleagues is just 20 percent, compared to 41 percent of Leave-voting members of the public working in Remain-dominated environments who say they feel free to speak. The share of Leavers who say a Leaver would *not* be willing to share their views at work is under 20 percent among the British public but over 60 percent among British Leave-supporting academics. Campus environments are thus considerably more chilly for right-wing supporters than off-campus ones.[40]

38. Sullivan, Andrew. 2018. "We All Live on Campus Now." *NYMag Intelligencer.* Available at https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/02/we-all-live-on-campus-now.html.

39. Kaufmann, Eric. 2021. 'Academic Freedom in Crisis: Punishment, Political Discrimination, and Self-Censorship,' Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (CSPI), March 1; Adekoya et. al. 'Academic Freedom in the UK', Policy Exchange, August 3, 2020

40. Ibid.

Diversity Training in British Organisations

A CSJ approach to national history and society, exemplified by terms such as white privilege, systemic discrimination and patriarchy, typically informs the pedagogy of diversity training. In the United States, 47 percent of respondents reported that diversity trainers told them that discrimination was the main reason for pay gaps between racial groups or the sexes. 42 percent said one or more of the CSJ terms 'white supremacy,' 'patriarchy' or 'white privilege' were used.[41]

Among British respondents, when asked what instructors said was the main reason for race and gender pay gaps, 37 percent of those who could remember said discrimination, a further 6 percent said instructors mentioned lifestyle choices, economic pressures or 'other', and 57 percent said the instructors did not provide a main reason. The latter response likely means that gaps were merely presented rather than explained, though it is possible that some instructors were genuinely open to the idea that gaps have multi-factorial causes. However, the fact that mention of discrimination dwarfed the mention of other listed factors suggests that the content of the training, as in America, embodies a significant CSJ component.[42]

This training is making substantial inroads into British workplaces. When I asked working British respondents about their organisation's policy on diversity training, 53 percent of those who said they knew what the policy of the organisation was said diversity training was mandatory, with a further 7 percent saying optional and 39 percent that it was not being offered. Even including those who didn't know, 40 percent said it was mandatory and a further 6 percent said it was optional. Provision is largely a function of size: 65 percent of individuals working in organisations with at least 100 employees said diversity training is mandatory where they work compared to 17 percent working in organisations of 10 to 99 people. Those with higher qualifications, women, Remain voters and people working in more Remain-leaning workplaces are significantly more likely to have encountered diversity training.
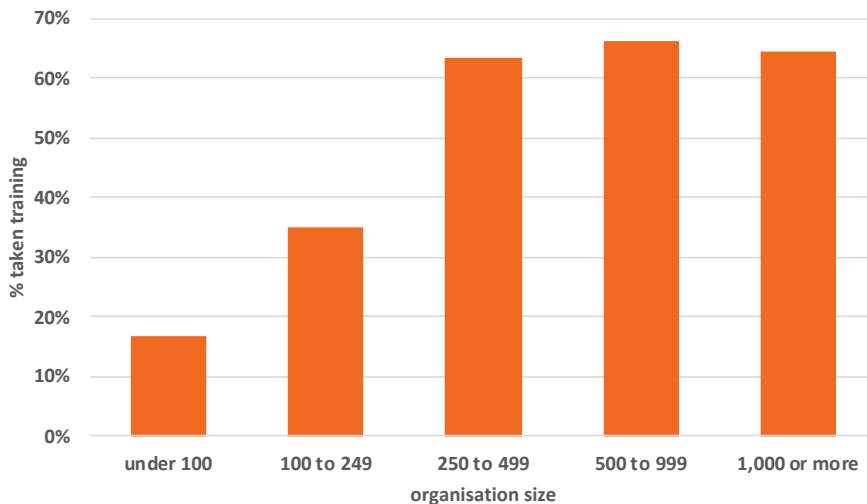
Among those where diversity training was optional, about half had taken it, and in places where it was mandatory, 91 percent had. Those with higher levels of education, whites, women and people with more left-wing attitudes were significantly more likely to have opted to take diversity training. Those in the public sector were around twice as likely to have taken diversity training as those in the private sector but this effect

41. Kaufmann, 'Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America', p. 41.

42. The question about CSJ terms was not included in the British survey due to space considerations.

was mainly an artefact of public sector organisations being larger in size. Figure 21 displays the share of working respondents who have attended diversity training by size of organisation, illustrating how organisation size is the key determinant of whether an individual has taken diversity training.

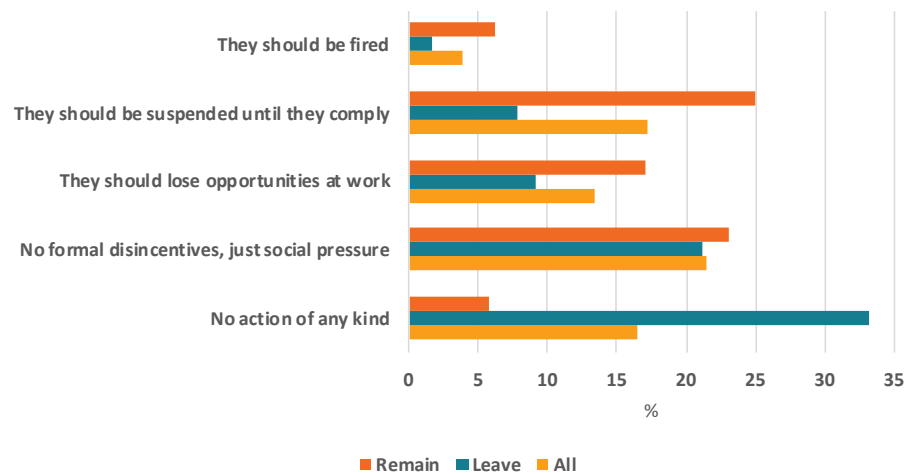**Figure 21: Taken Diversity Training, by Organisation Size**

N=430 (organisation size only available for a minority of the sample). Excludes those who don't know if diversity training is offered and those not in employment.

The implementation of diversity training, often embodying CSJ approaches, raises issues of freedom of conscience for those who disagree with the cultural leftist philosophy behind structural definitions of racism, sexism and other forms of bias. What happens if employees refuse to take the training? Organisations which have mandatory training are, by definition, likely to discipline those who refuse to conform to organisational dictates. Where does the public stand on this?

To understand people's views, I asked about a hypothetical scenario in which 'several white male employees refused to take diversity training in your organisation, saying that the training is hostile to their identity. In this situation, how do you think your organization should deal with them?' The range of responses, excluding the 28 percent who said they didn't know, is given in Figure 22. Remain supporters are significantly more likely to endorse institutional sanctions for non-compliance than Leave supporters: 63 percent of Remain-supporting respondents who gave an answer called for dissidents to lose opportunities, be suspended or fired, compared to 28 percent of Leave-supporting respondents. This exposes the soft-authoritarian face of seemingly-benign progressive initiatives.

Figure 22: How Should Those Who Refuse Diversity Training be Treated?, by Brexit Vote

N=972. Includes employed respondents only.

Though diversity training appears to be in place in around half of British workplaces, it does not seem to be associated with a respondent's attitudes to culture war questions. This is a different finding from the United States, where people who reported having taken diversity training were more likely to express cultural leftist attitudes.

Impact of Diversity Training on Employees

Prior research finds that diversity training has few measurable impacts, but can make race and gender relations more brittle as people come to focus on the racial, gender and other socio-demographic properties of their colleagues. In the United States, for example, I found that those who had taken diversity training were significantly more fearful of being punished for speech at work.[43]

While there was no similar blanket effect in Britain, exposure to diversity training did significantly increase the chilling effects on right-leaning voters (mainly Conservative). This effect encompassed both white and minority right party supporters. Figure 23 shows that 41 percent of right-voting employees who said they had taken diversity training felt worried for their job or reputation compared to 27 percent of right voters who had not taken training and 20-21 percent of left/liberal voters. This indicates that diversity training may be contributing to heightened threat perceptions among right-leaning employees.

Figure 23: Diversity Training and Worry about Losing Reputation or Job

Note: Effect is significant (chi2 test, p<.05), with N=612 right-voting subjects. Interaction effect of diversity training x right-wing ideology is significant in a logistic regression with controls for age, education, sexual orientation and gender.

43. Al-Gharbi, Musa. 'Diversity is Important. Diversity-Related Training is Terrible.' *Real Clear Politics*, Nov. 6, 2020; Kaufmann, 'The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America,' p. 43.
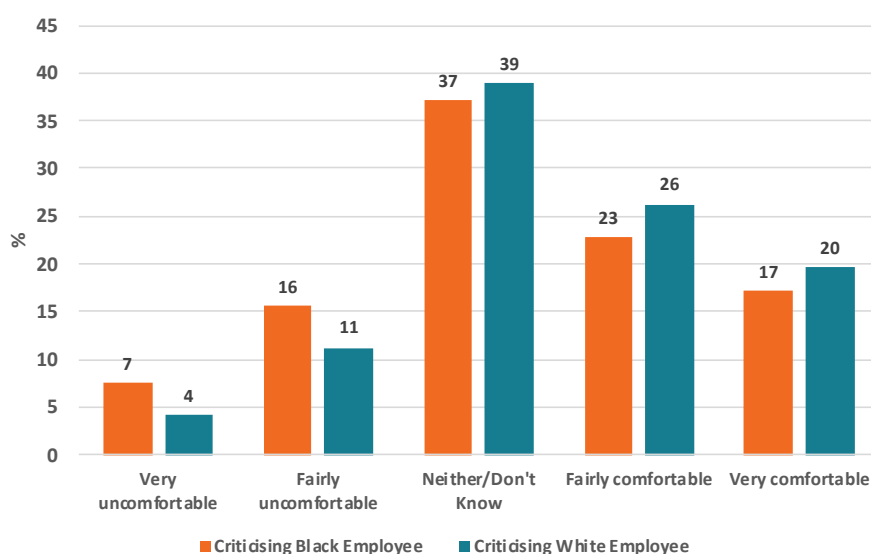
A deeper concern with diversity training is that its chilling effect could lead employees, especially whites, to limit contact with minority or female employees, notably when they are in a subordinate position. This may lead to a withdrawal of vital feedback which could help minority or female employees rise within an organisation.[44]

To explore this, I asked the following questions:

- How comfortable would you be giving negative feedback to a WHITE co-worker about their performance at work?
- How comfortable would you be giving negative feedback to a BLACK co-worker about their performance at work?

The results are displayed in Figure 24. These show that 23 percent of respondents say they would be very or fairly *uncomfortable* criticising a black co-worker compared to only 15 percent who say they would be uncomfortable criticising a white co-worker. People are also 6 points less *comfortable* criticising black compared to white colleagues. Black co-workers could thus be systematically missing out on important feedback that might help them correct errors to better meet performance criteria. This could hold them back when it comes to achieving a promotion.

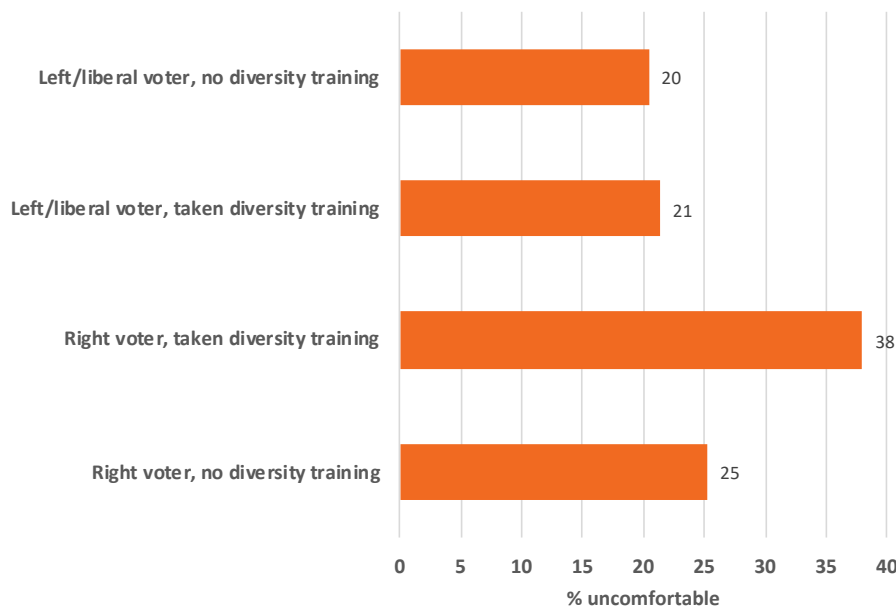**Figure 24: Comfortable Critising a Black/White Employee?**

N= 1,818.

As with fear of being disciplined for speech, right voters who have taken diversity training stand out from other workers. In the case of feeling uncomfortable giving negative feedback to a black co-worker, it is *white* right-wing respondents that differ significantly from others. As Figure 25 shows, 38 percent of white right-wing respondents who have taken diversity training say they would be uncomfortable giving negative feedback to a black co-worker compared to 25 percent of white right-

44. For example, see 'The Importance of Feedback in the Workplace,' *HR Central*, May 4, 2018

wing respondents who have not taken diversity training. Right voters who have not taken diversity training do not significantly differ from left voters who have not done so. This suggests that those whose political views may be in the minority are especially sensitive to politicised messages which suggest they may be violating official organisational values. By contrast, race, ideology and diversity training do not predict levels of comfort at criticising a white employee.

Figure 25: Diversity Training and Discomfort with Criticising a Black Co-Worker (Whites Only)
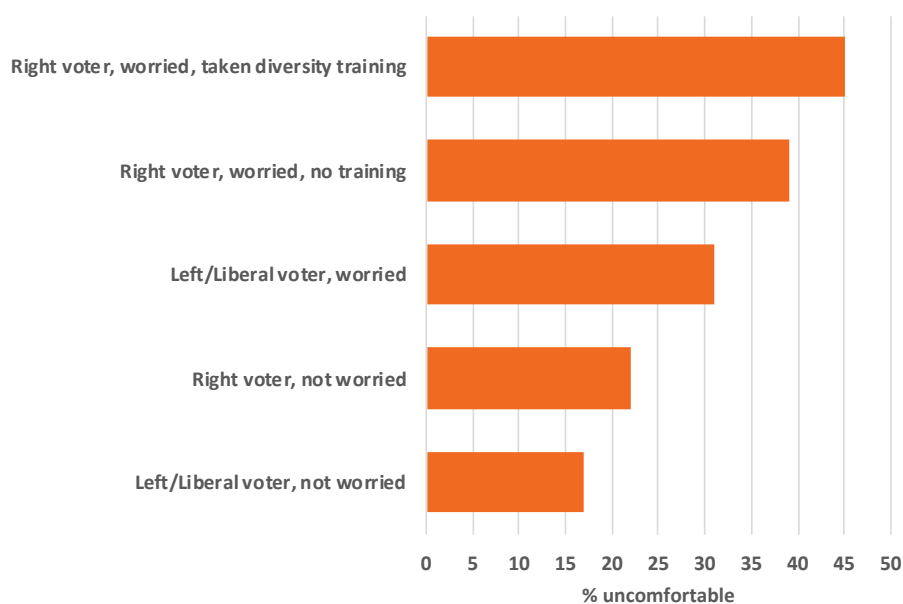

Note: Effect is significant (chi2 test, p<.05), with N=587 white right voters. Interaction effect of diversity training x right-wing ideology is significant in a logistic regression with controls for age, education, sexual orientation, gender, comfort criticising a white co-worker and fear of losing one's job or reputation for speech.

The impact of diversity training on right voter reluctance to criticise black co-workers is arguably even stronger than in Figure 25 because we earlier noted that training increases right-leaning workers' fear of losing their job or reputation. Figure 26 summarises the cumulative effects of ideology, worry and diversity training, this time for respondents of all races. Fully 45 percent – nearly half – of right-wing respondents who worry about losing their job or reputation for speech and have taken diversity training say they would be uncomfortable criticising a black employee.

31 percent of left or liberal voters who worry about losing their job or reputation for speech (recall that 21 percent of them do) say likewise, compared to 17 percent of left/liberal voters who are not worried about being cancelled. The upshot of this analysis is that diversity training is linked to higher reluctance among right-wing workers' to give negative feedback to black employees. This effect is both indirect, arguably working

through heightening employee fears of being punished for speech, and direct, where it may prime people to tiptoe around race. Furthermore, such training does nothing to assuage left and liberal employees who worry about losing their jobs or reputations for speech, and who therefore are relatively reluctant to criticise black employees. With over 60 percent of respondents in large organisations undergoing diversity training, such policies could be producing a significant negative effect on employee wellbeing while weakening levels of feedback to black employees, limiting black advancement.

Figure 26: Uncomfortable Criticising a Black Co-Worker, by fear of job/reputation loss and vote

N ranges from 41 right voters who are worried and have taken diversity training to 626 left/liberal voters who are unworried. Effect for being worried is significant in chi2 test and regressions at p<.001 level.

Attitudes to Policy Measures

The final section of this report examines respondents' views of various measures that have been proposed to counter the illiberal effects of cultural leftist activism and institutional practices.

There are three dimensions when it comes to attitudes to illiberal policies. First, whether a respondent leans toward the values of cultural leftism over cultural liberalism where the two collide. Second, whether they prefer government intervention or market competition as the solution to problems of progressive illiberalism. Third, whether the form of illiberalism is what I term 'hard authoritarianism', involving institutional punishment for speech or non-compliance with politicised corporate training and policies; or 'soft authoritarianism', wherein political discrimination or corporate political messaging produces a peer-driven climate of chilling effects, leading political minorities such as classical liberals, conservatives or gender-critical feminists to self-censor.[45]

Following on from the previous discussion about diversity training, the first question put to respondents is whether the government should or should not ban diversity training that tells 'employees that they are upholding white supremacy and structural racism if they refuse to acknowledge their white privilege.' 38 percent of respondents said this should be banned, 24 percent that it should not be, with a further 39 percent saying they didn't know. Right voters who had an opinion inclined 52-16 in favour of a ban. Left and liberal voters were more evenly divided, with 29 percent favouring a ban and 32 percent against. The 38-24 preponderance in favour of a ban in Britain is smaller, in proportional terms, than the 53-26 support for such a ban in the United States. The partisan divide in Britain (16-23 points) on this question is, however, similar to that in the US (16-21 points).

Overall, the preponderance of responses among those with an opinion is in favour of a ban. This suggests government should be auditing the content of organisations' diversity training to ensure that it does not violate equality laws around equal treatment with regard to protected characteristics, and is compliant with employees' right to freedom of conscience – i.e. not being compelled to endorse beliefs they disagree with.

A second policy question involves how to address the problem of cancel culture in universities. Respondents were asked, 'Would you support or oppose the Government passing laws preventing universities from disciplining university professors for making comments around race, gender or sexuality that are legal, but which some may consider

45. Kaufmann, Eric. 2021. 'Academic Freedom in Crisis: Punishment, Political Discrimination, and Self-Censorship,' Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (CSPI), March 1

offensive or controversial?' In practice, the government has often defended academics' right to free speech, as in the case of Kathleen Stock, but on certain occasions, as with Professor David Miller of the University of Bristol and his comments which some perceived as anti-Semitic, has come down against free speech.[46]

While the exact nature of the comments was not specified in the survey, the responses provide an indication of where the public stands on regulations designed to protect the expressive freedom of academics. Opinion was divided, with 33 percent supporting such laws and 35 percent opposing them, with a further 32 percent undecided. Among Conservative (and Brexit Party) supporters, there was support, by a 43-34 margin while Labour, Lib Dem, Green and Nationalist party voters opposed a ban by a 38-29 margin.

When queried about whether a private organisation should be prevented from firing for speech, results showed that 36 percent of people opposed such a law while 30 percent supported it. Right voters backed such a law 39-34 and left/liberal voters opposed it 41-29.

In the US, with a slightly different question: 'The government should step in to overrule public universities/private organisations who punish employees for making legal but controversial statements on social media around race, gender or sexuality', respondents supported government intervention 44-31 for universities and 38-36 for private organisations.

The partisan gap on these questions in Britain is 4-14 points, which is narrower than what we find for the culture war questions visited earlier in the report. A third of the most right-wing respondents oppose governments regulating institutions while a quarter of the most left-wing respondents endorse regulation. A similar pattern holds for those who most oppose or most support political correctness. This indicates that attitudes to government regulation, or trust in government, likely also factor into people's policy attitudes. Culture war attitudes, voting and ideology explain only a small share of the variation in people's support for such measures. In the US, the partisan gap was also a relatively narrow 7-11 points for the question on universities and 2-4 points for that on private organisations.

British public opinion on government regulation of organisations is thus finely balanced, with around a third of people undecided or unsure. These results suggest that there is currently no consensus, with many people supporting government action and many opposed. The fact an equivalent group have not made up their minds suggests that the path is open for government to make the case for regulating institutions' power to fire employees for speech. In practice, much will likely depend on definitions and proportionality: namely what disciplinary measures are employed by institutions, and how reasonable is the taking of offense by aggrieved parties.

46. 'Professor David Miller Sacked over Israel Comments,' *BBC News*, 1 October, 2021.

Viewpoint Diversity

The next set of policy questions focused more on soft forms of illiberalism springing from the political slant in organisations. This is especially important for many elite professions, whose median employee is increasingly culturally socialist and left-wing in voting behaviour.[47] One proposal I have mooted in the past concerns the question of whether organisations should benchmark action on political and ideological diversity and equity to measures they have adopted for race, gender and other forms of equity and diversity.[48] The question for British respondents reads, 'Thinking about representation of academic staff at universities, do you think they should or should not be actively doing more to improve diversity in each of the following areas?' The options included political views, gender and race.

Results in Figure 27 highlight the fact that 40 percent of respondents support more action on improving political diversity, 46 percent on gender diversity and 51 percent on racial diversity. The opposition, which is not shown, is 27 percent against promoting political diversity, 25 percent against action on gender diversity and 22 percent opposing more action on racial diversity. Thus, by a 40-27 margin, respondents support more work to improve political diversity.
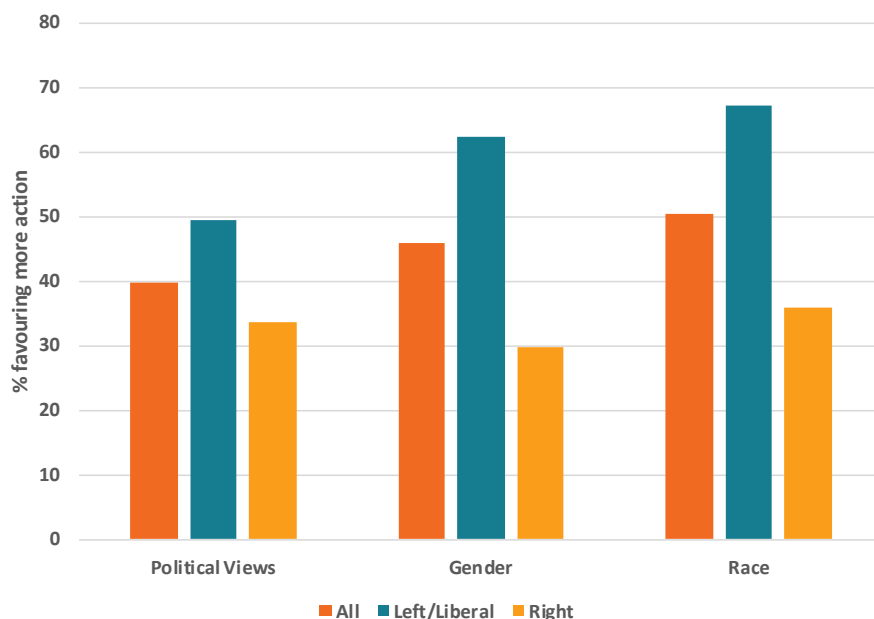
Around a third of right-wing respondents support action to improve diversity of any kind, with relatively equal priority given to politics, gender and race. Left and liberal respondents are significantly more supportive of all diversity initiatives. While this is clearest with respect to race, where 67 percent favour more action, and gender, where 62 percent do, this sentiment also encompasses political diversity, where half of left/liberal voters back efforts to improve diversity.

In an experiment, half the sample read a preface to this question: 'Professors and journalists have shifted from being slightly left-leaning in the 1960s to being largely left-leaning today. At the same time they have become more representative in race and gender terms.' Those who read this preface did not significantly differ from those who did not read it, suggesting that the left's support for policies promoting political diversity and the right's relative opposition to it do not stem from their perceptions of which political group would benefit from such a policy.

47. Bonica, A., et al. (2017). "The political ideol-ogies of law clerks." American Law and Eco-nomics Review **19**(1): 96-128; Bonica, A., et al. (2020). "Ideological sorting of physicians in both geography and the workplace." Jour-nal of Health Politics, Policy and Law **45**(6): 1023-1057.

48. Kaufmann, 'Political Discrimination as Civ-il-Rights Struggle'

Figure 27: Support Doing More to Improve Diversity in Following Areas

Note: N= 1,818 all, 790 left/liberal and 624 right. Note that YouGov lacks 2019 vote for over 400 respondents.

A final question sought to assess support for a policy of equivalent action across the three dimensions. 'If there were a trade off between improving political diversity or improving gender and race diversity, which of the following should be prioritised,' people were asked. Options were as follows:

1. Improving political diversity should be prioritised over race and gender diversity
2. Improving race and gender diversity should be prioritised over political diversity
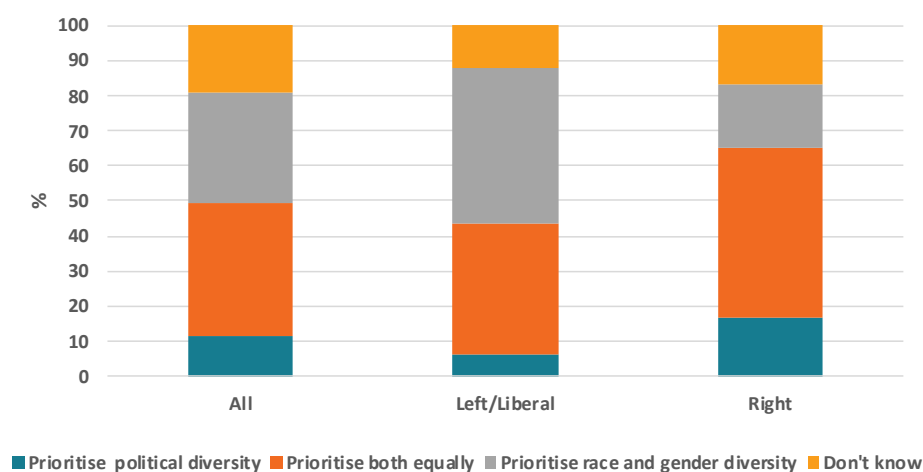3. Both should be prioritised equally
4. Don't know

Figure 28 shows that around half – 49 percent – of respondents would prioritise political diversity at a higher or equal level to race/gender diversity, with just 31 percent favouring the status quo of prioritising race and gender diversity. If we exclude those who say they don't know, a clear majority of around 60 percent of people support the idea of equivalent action on political and race/gender forms of diversity. These numbers are similar to those in the US, where, with a slightly different question, I found 48 percent support for equivalent action on political diversity, compared to 33 percent in favour of the status quo of taking more action on race/gender diversity than political diversity.

There is a substantial partisan difference, with 44 percent of left/liberal

voters but just 18 percent of right voters endorsing the status quo policy of prioritising race/gender over political diversity. A higher share of right voters (17%) than left/liberal voters (12%) also ticked the 'don't know' option. This could signal opposition to all forms of improving diversity. In the US, where respondents had the option to say 'no' to all forms of improving diversity, 29 percent of Republicans did, compared to just 12 percent of Democrats. By contrast, 53 percent of Democrats backed the idea of devoting more attention to political diversity as race/gender diversity compared to 43 percent of Republicans.

Both sets of results back the contention that there is strong bipartisan support for expanding equity and diversity policy to include political views. In the UK, around 6 in 10 individuals who have a view on this question support the idea of equivalent action on political views as on race and gender.

Figure 28: Prioritise Political or Race/Gender Diversity? (by 2019 vote)

Note: N= 1,818 all, 790 left/liberal and 624 right. Note that YouGov lacks 2019 vote for over 400 respondents.

Protecting Heritage and Culture

A final policy area concerns national heritage and cultural norms. Earlier, we noted that the typical respondent wanted the balance of pride and shame taught in schools to be 60:40, with a similar proportion favouring emphasising British achievements over focusing mainly on its shortcomings.

People are also invested in their national built heritage, including statuary. When asked, 'Do you think activists should or should not be allowed to remove statues without approval from the government,' 70 percent of those polled said this should not be allowed, compared to only 11 percent in support. By overwhelming margins, more people oppose than support removing Churchill's statue and renaming Hume Tower.

These findings suggest that the Conservative government's 'Retain and Explain' policy with respect to statues is popular, and that people wish to see institutions resisting attempts to rename buildings named for important historical figures. In general, people support new individuals being added to the school curriculum (and probably support new statues or buildings), but generally do not favour the removal and erasure of the past. Public attitudes thus solidly support the philosophy of Policy Exchange's 'History Matters' project and the History Reclaimed movement.[49]

The issue of trans women's access to female-only spaces partly involves a clash between cultural leftism and traditional gender norms, but is also involves an intra-cultural leftist struggle between trans activists (and their allies) and gender-critical feminists, both of whom prioritise harm avoidance and identity-based forms of equality, albeit with the empathic category being trans women in the first instance and biological females in the second.

Public opinion on these questions is not unidimensional. Recent polling shows that most people in Britain do not think trans women who have not undergone gender reassignment surgery should be able to enter a women's toilet (42% opposed v. 29% support), changing room (46 v 24) or compete in women's sports (57-19). Most want gender reassignment surgery to occur after age 18, and want discussion of trans issues to take place in secondary rather than primary school. However, they are open to the idea of trans rights and gender reassignment if this is viewed as optimal for an individual and arrived at after consultation between young adults and medical practitioners.[50]

Likewise, my results show some complexity. Most people defend the right of gender-critical feminists like Kathleen Stock (65% v. 24%) and J.K. Rowling (70-8) to speak freely without punishment. In addition, by a

49. https://policyexchange.org.uk/history-matters-project/; https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/

50. Tryl, Luke, Tryon Surnom, Arissa Kiranam, Conleth Burns, 'Britons and Gender Identity: Navigating common ground and division,' *More in Common*, June 2022

61-16 margin, respondents believe trans women should have to obtain a doctor's note of approval to change their legal gender rather than be able to change it without such approval.

On the other hand, when asked, 'Do you think transgender women should or should not be allowed to use women's refuges for victims of abuse (if they are a victim themselves),' 33 percent say trans women should have access to women's refuges while 36 percent say they should not.

Women are more likely than men to say a trans women should be able to enter a women's refuge, favouring this by a 36-32 margin while men oppose it 40 to 30. In fact, across all 6 questions pertaining to the trans issue (Stock, Rowling, refuges, gender identity, pronouns, teaching biological sex), women are significantly more supportive of the trans rights position even when ideology is taken into account. Women even exceed LGBT-identifiers in their support for the pro-trans position on many questions. Why? Is this not against the female interest? The likely answer is that women are more likely to be cultural leftists than men across most of the 25 attitudinal items in the survey. The inclination to empathise and care for groups perceived as vulnerable best accounts for the pattern.

The result of the empathy dynamic is that the gender-critical feminist position, while intellectually prominent, is still a contested view among women. Indeed, the largest source of opposition to greater trans access to women's spaces comes from cultural conservatives. Those who are concerned about renaming Hume Tower or moving Churchill's statue are vastly more opposed to an extension of trans access than many women. The one place we see some evidence of a gender-critical influence is among gays and lesbians. Though based on a small sample, gay men support trans women accessing women's refuges by a 68-12 margin whereas lesbians only support it 59-36. A somewhat similar pattern appears for the Stock and Rowling questions.

Overall, young, LGBT, female and left-wing respondents are significantly more likely to favour allowing trans women into women's refuges. Age and ideology are the strongest predictors, having a similar-sized effect, followed by LGBT and female, at about half as much predictive power. The strong age effect suggests this issue may become increasingly contentious as Gen-Z and Millennial cohorts make up a larger share of the electorate. All told, the trans issue is heavily bound up with the culture war divide between cultural leftists on the one side, and cultural liberals and patriots on the other.

Conclusion and Policy Prescriptions

This report explores the British public's attitudes to culture war questions which pit cultural leftist arguments emphasising psychological harm avoidance and the redistribution of structural power between identity groups against the claims of cultural liberals and patriots.

Cultural liberalism and patriotism are in the overwhelming majority among right and centrist voters who form the bulk of the electorate. Cultural leftism is strongest on the left and among young people. Those on the far left and those under age 35 are the most prominent constituencies for cultural leftism. Between a quarter and a half of young far leftists endorse dismissing or dropping controversial thinkers for their views and a majority support moving or renaming objects that depict controversial national heroes. Nearly 8 in 10 endorse political correctness. This suggests that as new generations enter the workforce, we should expect to see more rather than less employee activism and increasing pressure on organisations to adopt cultural leftist policies and discipline those who dissent.

On the other hand, around 7 in 10 respondents of all ages, excluding those without a view, opposed the cultural leftist position. This means that supporters of cultural liberalism and cultural patriotism outnumber those backing cultural leftism by a 2:1 margin. Not only that, but opinion on culture war questions divides the left and unites the right. On cancel culture, the far left is a relative outlier, with the centre left cleaving closer to the centre and centre-right. On Critical Race Theory-themed questions pertaining to national history and identity, conservatives are strongly opposed to what they view as attacks on their national and ethnic identity while those on the left are fragmented, with few strongly in support of cultural leftist positions. These patterns are very similar to what I find in American public opinion.

The net effect of this landscape of opinion is that the terrain in the culture war is strongly slanted against the left. These questions form an ideal issue on which conservative parties can unite both the right and the centre-ground, while creating divisions between the centre-left and the far left. The campaigns of American politicians such as Glenn Youngkin in Virginia or Ron De Santis in Florida show how effective this message can be. Left parties such as Labour will need to be careful not to allow themselves to be linked to culturally socialist positions. Such issues divide their base and permit the Conservatives to lure away centrist or soft-left

voters who are concerned about questions of expressive freedom and national heritage.

Labour's Keir Starmer has charted an uncertain path between left-wing activists and the public, opposing statue toppling yet endorsing removal, as well as struggling with questions of sex and gender.[51] While the attempt to deflect the conversation away from such questions with charges of 'stoking the culture war' is a strategy, trends in the British media, as in America, show that a rising volume of attention is being paid to these issues. The number of people familiar with terms such as 'woke' or 'cancel culture', to say nothing of concrete debates such as whether trans women should be permitted into women's sporting competitions, is rising steadily.[52] Consequently, a more secure approach for Labour would be to adopt what Democratic strategist David Shor and centre-left writer Matthew Yglesias term 'popularism', an approach which downplays unpopular cultural leftist policies while focusing on left-wing economic policies that command a wider appeal.[53]

The report also considers the degree to which British people have experienced a loss of expressive freedom. Around a quarter of Britons say they worry for their reputations or jobs because others may misinterpret what they say. This share is higher among those on the right of the political spectrum, especially young conservatives, who have a nearly 1 in 2 chance of saying they fear for their jobs or reputations because of how others may spin their words.

In terms of softer forms of authoritarianism, the impact of peer pressure in Remain-dominated institutions means that 44 percent of Leave supporters in such places say a Leaver would not express their views to a colleague. Overall, 57 percent of Leave supporters are either not comfortable sharing their beliefs at work, or unsure. A majority of those polled say that political correctness has gone too far and that the political climate prevents them expressing beliefs they think are true. Among conservatives, these figures are considerably higher. These findings speak to a significant impediment to expressive freedom in British public spaces, notably in large organisations.

Those who worry about losing their jobs or reputations due to speech or online activity are also substantially more likely than others to be uncomfortable delivering negative feedback to a black colleague – feedback which is often vital for career advancement. Diversity training, which is being experienced by over 6 in 10 people working in organisations of more than 100 people, appears to be making this problem worse. Right-leaning workers who have taken diversity training are significantly more likely than those who have not taken such training to worry about losing their jobs and reputations. They are also more reluctant to criticise a black colleague than right-leaning employees who have not taken diversity training.

As with prior work which finds diversity training to produce negative outcomes, I find such training to be associated with increased threat perceptions, reduced freedom and a greater unwillingness to provide

51. Hayton, Debbie, 'Keir Starmer's gender identity muddle,' *Spectator*, 13 March, 2022; Buchan, Lizzie, 'Keir Starmer says 'completely wrong' to tear Colston statue down but it should have gone 'long ago',' *Independent*, 8 June, 2020.

52. Rozado and Kaufmann, 'The Increasing Frequency of Terms Denoting Political Extremism in US and UK News Media'

53. Klein, Ezra, 'David Shor Is Telling Democrats What They Don't Want to Hear,' *New York Times*, Oct. 8, 2021

useful feedback to black colleagues. Government and organisations would do well to pause their current forms of diversity training until such time as versions can be found which show demonstrably positive effects in randomised control trials. In addition, current EDI initiatives in government should be audited for political non-discrimination and violations of employees' right to freedom of speech.

Public workplaces should not promote cultural leftist positions through diversity training, statements of values or public communications. Theories such as structural racism, white privilege or patriarchy are contentious political ideas, not consensus values. Impartiality is already part of the law governing schools and civil service obligations. Government should enforce impartiality on these issues across the public sector, including the civil service, NHS and schools.

Private workplaces also should not promote cultural leftist positions. These are political questions fraught with controversy, not questions over which there is a moral consensus. Politicising workplace can alienate workers, lead to more brittle inter-racial interactions, pose a risk to an organisation's reputation and make it harder to retain talent.

Finally, the findings of this report show majority support for what I term 'equivalent action': equalising attention between political and race/gender forms of diversity and equity in organisations. Very few back the status quo of concentrating only on race and gender while ignoring the steady erosion of political diversity in many elite institutions.