The impact of political polarisation on strategic consensus

This thesis investigates the impact of political polarisation within governance boards on the likelihood of achieving strategic consensus specifically within Dutch water management organisations. Recognising that boards often operate in highly polarised environments, the study addresses a critical gap in understanding how polarisation and particularly affective polarisation disrupt collaborative decision-making processes. Building on theories of group polarisation and social identity, this study employs a quantitative analysis of board meeting transcripts combined with linguistic expression metrics via LIWC to quantify affect and polarisation indicators. The findings indicate that increased affective polarisation measured by linguistic markers, reduces the probability of consensus especially in high-salience issues. Contributions with more unique speakers also tend to have a negative effect on unanimous decisions further impeding consensus-building. Although some evidence suggests polarisation may impair unanimous decision-making, effects are context-dependent and moderated by issue salience indicated by a non-significant but plausible curvilinear relationship. The study concludes that institutional design and targeted conflict mitigation strategies are essential to mitigate polarisation's adverse effects, thereby enhancing governance effectiveness in ideologically divided settings.

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1.0 | Introduction

The role of diversity in decision-making boardrooms has been widely studied, with research highlighting its impact on firm performance (Rockey & Zakir, 2020) and consensus (Knight et al., 1999). Within this domain, Upper Echelons Theory (UET) has been essential in explaining how the backgrounds and values of executives influence strategic choices (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Traditionally, studies utilising UET have examined demographic diversity such as age, education and functional background as key factors shaping organisational outcomes (Pegels et al., 2000, p. 913) or decision-making processes (Kellermanns et al., 2005, p. 724). More recently, research has extended this demographic diversity focus to political ideology, exploring how differing ideological orientations from executives shape corporate social responsibility (Gupta & Briscoe, 2017, p. 1019) or lobbying activity (Nalick et al., 2022). In UET literature, political ideology is a recently developed concept that identifies the political views an executive personally supports (Weng & Yang, 2023; Chin et al., 2013). While prior research has examined how group-level cognitive biases such as group polarisation influence board decisions under performance pressure (Zhang et al., 2023, p. 202), the underlying mechanisms for these biases remain poorly understood due to the lack of direct insight into boardroom dynamics. Similarly, while DeBode et al. (2023, p. 186) explore ideological divides within top management teams, their focus lacks depth in the measurement of polarisation under different conditions and group formations.

Despite the upcoming literature on political ideology and firm outcomes, little is known about how political polarisation. An unique form of deep-level diversity (DeBode et al., 2023, p. 186) and considered an extreme form of separation (Harrison & Klein, 2007, p. 1204, 1208), effects the ability of governance actors to achieve strategic consensus. UET research has consistently demonstrated that political ideology influences a wide array of firm-level outcomes (Nalick et al., 2022, p. 1107; Weng & Yang, 2023; Gupta et al., 2020). Although these studies shed light on how political ideology effects executive perceptions and firm outcomes, these studies often stop short of examining ideological differences within governing boards. Specifically, they overlook how deep ideological divides such as political polarisation may inhibit or alter processes essential to effective governance such as strategic consensus. Therefore, a theoretical void exists in understanding the interplay and conditions in the process of political polarisation possibly impeding or enabling consensus within decision-making bodies.

It is important to understand how polarisation can influence the way decisions are made, since the current political climate is becoming more polarised (McCoy & Somer, 2018). As Sunstein (2002) explains, when people who share similar views come together to talk, they often end up holding even more extreme versions of those views. A pattern known as group polarisation. For institutions trying to govern effectively in such an environment, this means that reaching common ground becomes harder and decisions can drift toward the extremes rather than toward compromise. This polarised environment can create significant barriers to consensus-building making between groups (Iyengar and Westwood (2015) but also within groups (Whyte, 1989). Drawing on Whyte's (1989) extension of groupthink theory, a polarised environment can also foster an atmosphere where the drive for unanimity within a group suppresses dissent. This could narrow the perspectives present and eventually obstruct meaningful consensus-building. But also, political divergence between groups or corporate leaders can diminish organisational efficiencies by reducing effective engagement in lobbying activities and strategic alignment (Nalick et al., 2022, p.1131, 1132).

This research aims to provide empirical insights into how political polarisation influences consensus-building in corporate governance institutions. Providing insights that could help understanding the challenges of managing politically diverse boards. The study contributes to the broader literature on corporate governance and political ideology by examining this influence of polarisation on consensus. Trying to reveal the conditions under which political polarisation enhances or hinders decision-making. This study uses a case study on the Dutch water management organisations, because the boards of these organisation represent diverse political ideologies and actually need to make decisions on complex governance challenges. These organisations play a critical role in managing water safety and environmental sustainability making strategic consensus essential for effective governance (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024; Van Den Oever & Shropshire, 2024). The participative nature of these boards that include representatives from multiple political parties and stakeholder groups, provides an unique setting to examine how strategic consensus is influenced in intergroup decision-making (Porck et al., 2018, p. 235).

Considering the context of Dutch waterboards where political factions are already present, it makes sense to use political polarisation due to its extreme context. This research responds to calls for further study on external sociopolitical values in organisations beyond the liberalism-conservatism continuum often seen in the U.S. (Gupta & Briscoe, 2020, p. 553), addressing the gap regarding the interplay of political polarisation on strategic consensus. Therefore, the central research question of this thesis is:

"How does political polarisation within the board of the Dutch water management organisations effect strategic consensus in decision-making?"

By analysing transcripts of board meetings, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the impact of political polarisation on strategic consensus, offering insights into the challenges of intergroup decision-making in ideologically polarised institutions. This study builds on the existing literature by examining how ideological divisions disrupt the consensus-building process and provides empirical evidence on the effects of political polarisation on unanimous decision-making in a board context. Therefore offering insights to the corporate governance literature by addressing the existing “black box” in the understanding of board deliberations.

2.0 | Theoretical framework

2.1 | Diversity and polarisation

Upper Echelon Theory (UET) is often used when studying diversity. An extension of UET, political ideology adds a new layer of values to our understanding of how executives affect organisational outcomes (Chin et al., 2013, p. 199). With this extension scholars can better explain the differences in strategic decision-making across companies with similar industrial conditions but executives with different ideological stances by incorporating political ideology into UET. This perspective emphasises how top executives' personal values and ideological beliefs such as their liberal or conservative orientations, can fundamentally influence their strategic choices. Thus showing that choices are not solely driven by rational responses to external market forces (Chin et al., 2013, pp. 201, 220, 223).

Swigart et al. (2020) propose that political ideology can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: cognitive, social and behavioural. First, the cognitive aspect reflects an individual's core values. These values range across different ideological spectrums such as a preference for change versus tradition or equality versus hierarchy. Second, the social aspect highlights political ideology as a means of group identification. Individuals use their political leanings to define themselves, identifying with like-minded individuals and setting themselves apart from opposing groupings. Becoming liberal or conservative strengthens ideological differences and creates a sense of community and belonging. Lastly, the behavioural component illustrates how political ideology shapes behaviour. A person's degree of involvement in political activities, such as contributing to campaigns or endorsing political causes is frequently determined by their political membership. Although Swigart et al. (2020, p. 1067) acknowledge the potential for a multidimensional approach that allows for differentiation in terms of social and economic values, they instead employ a unidimensional approach (liberal vs. conservative) because of its extensive use in organisational and political sciences. Frequently in studies conducted in the United States (Weng & Yang, 2023, p. 1077). Considering political ideology is different to other types of deep level diversity, this study postulates that especially the social aspect of political ideology would inherently lead to polarisation (DeBode et al., 2023, p. 186). In contrast to an unidimensional approach. This thesis employs a multidimensional approach to ideological conflict, considering that European political systems particularly those based on proportional representation tend to produce more fluid and varied coalitions compared to the stable two-party alignment seen in the United States (Lijphart, 1999).

An increasing amount of research expands this UET framework to include political ideology as a significant factor in executive decision-making (Nalick et al., 2022, p. 1109), whereas

early UET applications mainly concentrated on professional and demographic characteristics (Pegels et al., 2000, p. 913; Chin et al., 2013). Political ideology acts as a cognitive filter that affects how executives view governance issues, corporate social responsibility, and regulatory environments, just like professional experiences affect strategic priorities (Weng & Yang, 2023, p. 1075). For instance, studies have indicated that liberal executives are more likely to support social responsibility, environmental initiatives, and stakeholder engagement, while conservative executives are more likely to support cost-cutting, deregulation, and shareholder primacy (Chin et al., 2013, p. 201; Jost, 2006). This ideological dimension of UET highlights that governance outcome are not only influenced by demographic and experiential factors but also by deeper ideological convictions, offering a more nuanced understanding of how leadership teams navigate strategic choices (Gupta & Wowak, 2017, p.6). Political ideology represents a complex form of deep-level diversity (DeBode et al., 2023, p. 186), making it essential to explore diversity more comprehensively. Decision-making bodies such as boards and executive teams are composed of individuals who bring distinct perspectives and evaluative decision in different ways. “Diversity refers to the distribution of personal attributes among interdependent members of a work unit” (Milliken & Martins, 1996, p. 403). Within the field of strategic management, diversity has been widely examined for its potential to both enrich strategic deliberation through creativity, but can also disrupt group functioning (van Knippenberg et al., 2004, p. 1009).

To systematically conceptualise these divergent effects of the concept diversity, Harrison and Klein (2007) offer a typology distinguishing between separation, variety and disparity. Each reflecting different outcomes of team diversity. Harrison & Klein (2007, p. 1200) define separation as “differences in position or opinion among unit members,” particularly when members hold opposing views along a single continuum such as attitudes, beliefs and values. Variety on the other hand captures differences in information or expertise and disparity relates to hierarchical power differences. Separation is therefore different, referring to lateral diversity meaning that individuals are positioned at varying points along a shared ideological spectrum. Polarisation occurs when separation becomes extreme, leading to entrenched factionalism (Harrison & Klein, 2007, p. 1204). Harrison & Klein’s (2007) framework suggests that maximum separation occurs when a unit is bimodally distributed, meaning that board members form two opposing ideological camps with no middle ground. A pattern that mirrors political governance settings where group polarisation leads individuals to align more strongly with partisan affiliations and reduces cross-ideological deliberation and opportunities for compromise (Sunstein, 2002, p. 176). Because identification with a political party is enough to activate a strong affective bias (Mason, 2014, p.141).

Polarisation research can be divided into two approaches, compromising ideological or issue based polarisation and the second approach can been labelled as affective, behavioural or social polarisation. The first approach towards polarisation focuses on opinions on certain political topics, combining for instance the dispersion of diverse opinions on an issue and the bimodality or clustering of opinions around an issue (DiMaggio et al., 1996, p. 694). Therefore they assume that polarisation can be measured as the dispersion and kurtosis distribution of political behaviour and decision-making of politicians. DiMaggio et al. (1996, p. 696) also propose through issue constraint that there are correlations between issues and issue constraint functions, as social cohesion or group formation around certain topics. These coalitions are distinct from formal teams or committees and emerge around specific issues and dissolve once mutual interests expire (Mithani & O'Brien, 2020, p. 172). Rather than analysing polarisation on an issue-by-issue basis, it becomes more meaningful to assess it through broader ideological constraint (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008, p. 409). High alignment makes for clear ideological sorting, so individuals consistently can agree or disagree based on shared ideological orientation. This coherence helps both ingroup formation and intergroup conflict, making high issue alignment a key driver of ideological polarisation (Baldassarri & Goldberg, 2014, p. 48). Political polarisation occurs not only because of ideological distinctions, but also because of a complicated combination of affective, cognitive and identity processes. It is important to note that social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is important to the formation of intragroup solidarity between ideological factions and outgroup disdain, even when policy disagreement is low. Ideological positions do matter (DiMaggio et al., 1996), however, instead of merely evaluating the dimension of political polarisation founded on ideology per se. It's more beneficial to evaluate the findings in the context of when and how ideological positions influence the phenomenon of polarisation.

The second approach towards polarisation arises due to the fact that the following authors (Huddy et al., 2015; Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Mason, 2013) state that ideological positions on specific issues do not cover everything of polarisation. They claim that the drivers for polarisation can be found when classical political science is combined with psychological theories. Namely, Mason (2013) introduce the separate processes of issue position polarisation, related to the increasing extremity of positions and behavioural polarisation. Behavioural polarisation is marked by growing partisan strength, partisan bias, activism and anger. Individuals experiencing this form of behavioural polarisation report stronger identification with their preferred party and evaluate its actions more favourably than those of the opposition. This intensified loyalty often translates into increased political activism aimed at defending party interests. Additionally, behavioural polarisation is

associated with heightened expressions of anger toward political opponents. To strengthen these arguments Mason (2014) and Huddy et al. (2015) build upon social identity theory from Tajfel & Turner (1979). Social identity theory relates to individuals having a personal identity of their own and a social identity of belonging to a group. When the social identity becomes stronger than their personal identity, Tajfel & Turner (1979) propose that individuals become more biased in their evaluations of the group, react with stronger emotions to group threats and these are not connected to issue attitudes but rather to behavioural outcomes of group strength (Mason, 2013, p. 143; Huddy et al., 2015, p. 3).

Similarly in this combination of political and psychological theories, Iyengar and Westwood (2015) introduce the concept of affective polarisation. Affective polarisation refers to a form of intergroup conflict that emerges when members of opposing political camps experience deep feelings of distrust and animosity. Not simply over policy disagreements but as a function of social identity and perceived group-based threat (Huddy & Yair, 2020, pp. 292–294). This emotional and identity-based form of polarisation extends well beyond ideological divisions, as partisan affiliation has become increasingly tied to social characteristics such as race, religion, geography, fostering a hardened “us vs. them” mentality (Huddy & Yair, 2020, p. 292-294). Drawing on social identity theory, they explain that individuals classify opposing partisans as outgroups and copartisans as ingroups, triggering affective and behavioural bias (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015, pp. 690–691). This perspective explains why partisans express greater animosity toward opposing party members than toward members of other salient social groups or stronger than racial prejudices. The resulting affective divide makes individuals less receptive to disagreement, that can escalate into identity threats and out-party hostility (Huddy & Yair, 2020, p. 295). In experimental settings, warm inter-party relations between leaders have been shown to reduce affective polarisation by mitigating perceived hostility and identity threat, more so than policy compromise could do alone (pp. 297–299). These findings suggest that affective polarisation shapes how individuals interpret criticism, often as a moral attack, and reduces their willingness to engage constructively or strive for consensus (Huddy & Yair, 2020, p. 304). As such, affective polarisation can disrupt task-oriented group dynamics and erode the conditions necessary for strategic cooperation.

McCoy & Somer (2019) also share similar thoughts, where political divisions evolve into "Us vs. Them" identities that run through all aspects of social life. This form of polarisation is not limited to ideological disagreement but manifests in mutual delegitimization and increasing spatial and psychological separation between camps (McCoy & Somer, 2019, pp. 236–244).

The emotional core of affective polarisation leads to a hardened unwillingness to cooperate or even recognise the legitimacy of political opponents (p. 258).

Affective polarisation undermines interpersonal trust and trust is essential for cooperative deliberation. When individuals perceive political out-group members as untrustworthy or morally suspect, they become less willing to engage fairly even in apolitical contexts. Iyengar and Westwood (2015) found that partisans systematically favour in-group members over equally or more qualified out-partisans in tasks such as hiring decisions and trust-based economic games (pp. 692–695). These findings imply that in politically polarised settings, trust erosion may lead to reduced willingness to share information or collaborate constructively, potentially hurting the consensus formation. Selective exposure and cognitive biases relate to people relying on sources that already support their ideologies and interpret new information through preexisting biases, that may even worsen this breakdown in communication (Taber & Lodge, 2006; Tsfati & Nir, 2017). Divergent framings of issues and possible solutions result from the fragmented information environments created by these cognitive processes. Reaching strategic consensus therefore gets harder as members get rooted in conflicting realities. Not only because people disagree on the results, but also because different groups have essentially different ideas about the problems. In sum, political polarisation undermines the antecedents necessary for strategic consensus by eroding social cohesion, weakening agreement-seeking behaviours, intensifying affective conflict and fragmenting the informational landscape. Together, these forces reduce the likelihood of shared understanding and coordinated action within governance bodies.

Lastly, Sunstein (2002) bring the definition of group polarisation to the discussion. Group polarisation entails that “members of a deliberating group predictably move towards a more extreme point in the direction indicated by the members’ predeliberation tendencies”. Group polarisation arises through both informational and normative mechanisms, namely individuals encounter persuasive arguments that reinforce their initial views referred to as informational influence and individuals also shift their positions to align with perceived group norms referred to as normative pressure. These processes have been articulated in psychology as persuasive arguments theory and social comparison theory (Isenberg, 1986), and applied in legal and political contexts as informational and normative drivers of collective extremity (Sunstein, 2002, p. 176). Zhu (2012) extends this concept to strategic decision-making within corporate boards, demonstrating that board members tend to amplify their initial preferences, for instance towards higher acquisition premiums after collective discussion. This is not only a function of informational bias, but also of social and reputational concerns. Board members may self-censor to avoid standing out, particularly in homogenous or hierarchically constrained groups (Zhu, 2012, p. 804). Similarly, Zhu (2013) finds that group consensus

leads to systematically elevated CEO compensation levels, illustrating how group polarisation can have measurable behavioural consequences even in high-stakes decisions.

2.2 | Strategic consensus

This thesis further explores the concept of strategic consensus given its relevance regarding decision-making. Strategic consensus is defined as “the shared understanding of strategic priorities among managers at the top, middle, and/or operating levels of the organisation” (Kellermanns et al., 2005). Strategic consensus represents the degree of team members of the management team aligning their perspectives on the organisation’s goals. The concept of strategic consensus has evolved from early studies that equated it with mere agreement among top management teams (Bourgeois, 1980) to a broader understanding that includes middle- and lower-level managers emphasising the importance of strategic priorities rather than just strategic ends and means (Dess & Origer, 1987; Kellermanns et al., 2005). However, this research does not seek to identify the shared understanding of strategic priorities among the different levels of the organisation. Therefore only the first part of the definition is used “the shared understanding of strategic priorities among managers”.

According to Kellermanns et al. (2005), strategic consensus is shaped by two primary sets of antecedents. The first set of antecedents stems from Upper Echelons Theory (UET). These antecedents emphasise the role of homogeneity in background characteristics, such as shared values and experiences in fostering social cohesion. Homogeneous leadership teams tend to exhibit greater cohesion and conformity, therefore increasing the likelihood of achieving strategic consensus (Knight et al., 1999). Extending political ideology from UET, ideological similarity works in a similar way: “similarities among group members lead to higher levels of cohesiveness, conformity, and consensus” (Kellermanns et al., 2005, p. 726). In contrast, ideological heterogeneity conceptualised as separation (Harrison & Klein, 2007) captures the extent of disagreement between factions within the overall decision-making body, such as ideological distance between liberals and conservatives in a cabinet. This inter-factional heterogeneity can fragment the group’s collective orientation, disrupt cohesion and reduce the potential for consensus-building (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Importantly, this notion of heterogeneity differs from earlier UET formulations that equated diversity with variety, that claim “greater diversity within a TMT produces superior information-processing capability” (Kellermanns et al., 2005, p. 726; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Here, heterogeneity is not about within-party ideological spread but rather the ideological dispersion across entire groups.

The second set of antecedents involves the nature of the decision-making process. Kellermanns et al. (2005) note that consensus is facilitated by agreement-seeking

behaviours, increased communication, member involvement and constructive cognitive conflict. These group processes have also been empirically validated as critical mediators by Knight et al. (1999), who find that TMT diversity in functional background and education, can increase interpersonal conflict. Consecutively reducing agreement-seeking behaviour and ultimately impairing strategic consensus. Knight et al. (1999) partially mediated model underscores that diversity affects consensus not just directly, but by shaping how teams engage with and process disagreement. This highlights the need to consider how separation instead of variety may similarly provoke emotional conflict, thus reflecting how political polarisation undermines consensus. Given the behavioural dimensions of group polarisation (Huddy et al., 2015; Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Mason, 2013) and consensus research (Kellermanns et al., 2005) it is hypothesised that.

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of political polarisation will lead to a lower likelihood of strategic consensus in governance boards.

Research indicates that politically charged topics can significantly influence the consensus process, with partisan identity and the politicisation of science often undermining the effectiveness of scientific consensus messages particularly on issues like climate change (Bolsen & Druckman, 2018). This is supported by image theory (Beach and Mitchell, 1987). Image theory posits that decision-making in complex contexts is guided by an integrated structure of values, goals, and strategies. These values, goals and strategies can be derived from the value image, trajectory image and the strategic image (Nelson, 2004, p. 29). Nelson (2004) state that specifically, in highly value-laden issues such as social responsibility or environmental impact, decision-makers' value images comprised of their principles and moral beliefs become central (Nelson, 2004, p. 30-31). Thus when values are salient, polarisation tends to reinforce ideological positions because individuals prioritise strategies aligned with their moral principles. This leads to the formation and defence of ideological coalitions.

This process aligns with image theory's assertion that values and principles drive decision processes in complex, normative issues, thus reducing the likelihood of reaching consensus (Nelson, 2004). In contrast, the influence of partisan identity is diminished for low-salience or technical issues where procedural considerations dominate. Decision-makers are more likely to prioritise compatibility and procedural agreement over ideological stances, resulting in a higher propensity for consensus despite underlying polarisation. This aligns with image theory's perspective that strategic images become more salient when values are less central, facilitating cooperation through shared procedural goals rather than ideological alignment (Nelson, 2004).

Hypothesis 2: The negative relationship between political polarisation and strategic consensus is stronger for high-salience (value-laden) agenda topics than for low-salience (technical) topics.

3.0 | Methods and Data

To examine the intricate processes within board meetings, this thesis builds further on an unique dataset comprising board meeting transcriptions from Dutch water management organisations gathered by Van den Oever & Shropshire (2024). These organisations oversee crucial tasks such as territorial safety, water quality/quantity management and sewage treatment (Van Den Oever & Shropshire, 2024; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024). According to Van Den Oever & Shropshire (2024), water authorities operate with financial independence generating revenue through their own taxation system. While Dutch water management organisations are often viewed as distinct from private entities, research from Mostert (2016) suggests that these differences may be overstated. As public and private organisations share many structural and operational similarities. Van Den Oever & Shropshire (2024) state that there are “additional likenesses in length of board terms for which directors are elected, the inclusion of stakeholder constituents, and the processes for selecting board members, as well as how the board selects top managers.” Although technical in nature, water authorities have become increasingly politicised in recent decades, particularly as climate and environmental policies become more ideologically charged (Mostert, 2016). Political parties, including national ones like VVD, PvdA, CDA, and newer ones like Partij voor de Dieren and Water Natuurlijk participate in elections (Mostert, 2016). There are currently 21 Dutch water management organisations. The general board of Dutch water management organisations includes around 18 to 30 representatives elected through general elections (held every 4 years) and stakeholder-appointed members from inhabitants, agricultural interests, business interests and nature conservation organisations (Kiesraad, 2023). Moreover they have an executive board led by a chairman and lastly, there is a Dijkgraaf who responsible for day-to-day operations and external representation. Their general boards function similarly to corporate boards, because directors are responsible for fiduciary duties such as financial governance and the selection and oversight of top management (Van Den Oever & Shropshire, 2024). Although corporate governance research primarily focuses on publicly traded companies, studying water authorities provides both generalisable insights and unique perspectives on governance dynamics.

3.1 | Dependent variable

Given the focus on unanimous decision-making within Dutch water authority boards, where members represent a range of political affiliations. The dependent variable is operationalised as a binary indicator of strategic consensus named Fullconsensus. Rather than capturing subjective perceptions of strategic alignment, this approach reflects observable agreement on decisions. Specifically, a dummy variable is used to denote whether a given decision was reached unanimously. This method aligns with prior research that conceptualises consensus through decision outcomes rather than attitudinal measures (Kellermanns et al., 2005; Porck et al., 2018). By using a binary coding scheme, where a value of 1 indicates a unanimous decision and 0 indicates any degree of dissent. This operationalisation offers a clear and parsimonious measure of intergroup consensus. Furthermore, this approach is not influenced by the relative size or voting power of political parties within the board, thereby ensuring that consensus reflects collective agreement rather than majority dominance.

3.2 | Independent variable

The independent variable Polarisation is measured via the language model LIWC, classified as a continuous variable and therefore centred during the analysis.

3.3 | Moderator

This study also explores whether the relationship between Polarisation and Fullconsensus is influenced by the Value-ladenness of the decision topic. DeBode et al. (2023) refer to value-ladenness as the extent to which a decision activates deeply held normative, ideological or identity-based beliefs, rather than being approached as a purely technical or administrative matter (DeBode et al., 2023). Drawing on DeBode et al. (2023) and Nelson (2004), value-ladenness is defined as the degree to which a topic reflects political-ideological positions or moral convictions that are salient in public and political discourse. Topics such as climate adaptation and governance policies are considered highly value-laden, whereas decisions on routine maintenance budgets or procedural matters are considered low in value-ladenness. Agenda items will be coded manually based on a content analysis of public board meeting agendas and decision texts. Each item will be assigned a value-ladenness score based on a 3-point ordinal scale found in Appendix 1.

3.4 | Control variable

Lastly, to ensure a robust estimation of the relationship between Polarisation and Fullconsensus, both the number of Words and the number of unique Speakers were included

in the analysis as control variables. Given that the dependent variable is a binary measure indicating whether a decision was unanimous or not, these controls were selected to account for alternative explanations that may influence voting outcomes beyond polarisation itself. Specifically, Words is included because polarisation should encompass not only ideological differences but also the emotional dynamics and interaction intensity among participants. Schweighofer (2018) showed within online conversations, that shorter messages contained higher emotional expressions both positive and negative. Individuals who produce longer messages are more likely to include justifications or arguments. These justifications tend to lengthen the comment and on average reduce its emotional tone. Similarly, the number of speakers may affect the likelihood of consensus, because more people means more opinions that make it harder to process all the conversations and reach a decision from this information. Although Words and number of Speakers are conceptually related, a prior correlation analysis indicated no problematic multicollinearity between them ($r = .816$, but VIFs < 3.3), justifying the inclusion of both in the regression model.

3.5 | Measurement

Each of the 523 transcript contributions gathered by Van den Oever & Shropshire (2024), relates to an agenda topic that includes multiple comments made by elected members and each agenda topic is thematically coded according to its value-ladeness. This study uses items from the literature, however the concept of value-ladeness lacks validated scales in empirical research therefore the construct measure can be found in the Appendix 1. For the purpose of this analysis, a contribution is defined as the total text on a particular agenda topic made by several or singular speakers. The study uses one datasets and one data collection methods. To collect the scores for polarisation a dictionary was employed using the language model, Language Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC). Importantly, the LIWC scores used here are percentage-based, meaning that affective scores reflect the proportion of emotional words relative to total word count. This design controls for the confounding effect of verbosity. Meaning that longer entries do not automatically result in higher affect scores.

This model was generated on the dictionary of Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker (2025), measuring polarisation through a combination of negative affect and delegitimization. The dictionary needed translation for usage on the Dutch transcripts. To ensure analytical precision, only contributions that have text and a value-laden score assigned to them were included, namely some contributions had no text, polarisation score or topic assigned. This resulted in a final sample of 416 coded contributions, each of the contributions includes a

polarisation score, value-laden score and a binary outcome variable indicating whether the board reached a unanimous decision (1) or not (0) on that agenda topic.

4.0 | Results

Table 1 represents the sample distributions of the model from Van Den Oever & Shropshire (2024) for the filtered sample (*N* = 416). The descriptive statistics show the distribution of Polarisation, Words, Speakers, Fullconsensus and Value-ladeness. The mean of Fullconsensus (mean = 0.89) shows that most decisions have reached an unanimous decision, while value-laden scores ranged from 1 to 3. With most contributions falling into the “medium” and “high” categories (mean = 2.05).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics

	N statistic	***Min***	***Max***	***Mean***	***Std. Deviation***
Polarisation (centred)	416	-.86	5.42	-.0076	1.001
Words	416	0	25341	1706.61	3605.49
Fullconsensus	416	0	1	.89	.311
Value-laden	416	1	3	2.05	.787
Speakers	416	0	20	4.55	4.66
Valid N (listwise)	416				

The correlation matrix seen in Table 2, indicates a strong positive correlation between the control variables Speakers and Words ($r = .816$, $p < .001$), suggesting potential multicollinearity. However, since these variables are included solely as controls and their individual effects are not central to the theoretical argument, both are retained in the model. Notably, their inclusion does not affect the significance or direction of the key interaction effect between Polarisation and Value-ladenness. Furthermore, the correlations between Polarisation and all other predictors, including the dummy variables for Low and Medium Value-ladenness, are low and non-problematic ($r < .14$), indicating no multicollinearity

concerns among the main independent variables. This supports the robustness of the model specification with regard to multicollinearity

Table 2

		Polarisation	*Words*	*Speakers*	*Low value-laden*	*Medium value-laden*
Polarisation	Pearson Correlation	1	.086	.139	-.074	.048
	Sig (2-tailed)		.079	.004	.129	.329
Words	Pearson Correlation	.086	1	.816	-.101	.165
	Sig (2-tailed)	.079		.000	.040	.001
Speakers	Pearson Correlation	.139	.816	1	-.134	.158
	Sig (2-tailed)	.004	.000		.006	.001
Low value-laden	Pearson Correlation	-.074	-.101	-.134	1	-.492
	Sig (2-tailed)	.129	.040	.006		.000
Medium value-laden	Pearson Correlation	.048	.165	.158	-.492	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.329	.001	.001	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The logistic regression (Table 3) indicates a good fit with the data, with $\chi^2(6) = 73.713$, $p < .001$, so the model significantly improves over the null model. Moreover, the Nagelkerke R^2 indicates moderate explanatory power, and the Hosmer & Lemeshow test being non-significant indicates a good of fit. Lastly the classification accuracy confirms the model predicts unanimous outcomes very well, though struggles with non-unanimous decisions.

Table 3

Logistic regression goodness of fit measures

Model fit statistics	***value***
Omnibus Test	χ^2 (6) = 73.713, p < .001
Nagelkerke R²	.327
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test	$\chi^2(8) = 4.228$, p < .836
Classification accuracy overall	89.2%
Classification accuracy unanimous cases	98.4%

Classification accuracy non-unanimous cases	13.3%

The study tests the hypotheses with a logistic regression model reflecting the dichotomous dependent variable as unanimous decisions, secondly the independent variables in the model are polarisation and value-ladeness. Polarisation is continuous and the variable value-ladeness is ordinal. The analysis followed two filtering phases where only contributions that have text and a value-laden score assigned to them were included in the final logistic regression. Model 3 seems to accurately predict the phenomenon, as the total classification accuracy for the model is 89.2%, however do not classify non-unanimous cases that well 13.3%. The results of Model 3 show that polarisation has a marginal significant (p = .068) impact on unanimous decisions in a negative way. Higher polarisation tends to reduce the odds of consensus. While not conventionally significant at the 0.05 level, this result suggests a potentially meaningful effect that warrants further investigation. Also taking into account that Model 2 does show a significant effect (p = .004) for polarisation by excluding the interaction effect. In isolation, the degree of value-ladenness for low (B = 0.160, p = .774) and medium (B = -0.176, p = .698) do not significantly affect the likelihood of unanimous decisions. For the moderation effects of the interaction terms concerning value-ladeness, there is a positive but non-significant interaction for low-value laden topics suggesting that the negative effect of polarisation is potentially weakened or reversed when the topic is low in value-ladenness. Moreover, there is no meaningful interaction (B = -0.041, p = .916) observed for the medium value-laden agenda topics, polarisation seems to have a negative but non-significant effect at moderate levels of value-ladenness. Thus the results for Model 3 do not support the hypothesis H1 and H2 looking at the non-significant main effect of polarisation and non-significant moderation effect of low and value-laden topics (Table 4).

Table 4

Regression results model 1

	B	***S.E.***	***Wald***	***df***	***Sig.***	***Exp(B)***
Words	.000	.000	.849	1	.357	1.000
Speakers	-.273	.053	26.631	1	.000	.761
Constant	3.798	.364	109.193	1	.000	44.632

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Words, Speakers

Regression results model 2

	B	***S.E.***	***Wald***	***df***	***Sig.***	***Exp(B)***
Words	.000	.000	.980	1	.322	1.000

Speakers	-.277	.055	25.219	1	.000	.680
Polarisation-centred	-.501	.172	8.517	1	.004	.606
Low value-laden	.297	.526	.318	1	.573	1.346
Medium value-laden	-.207	.407	.258	1	.612	.813

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Words, Speakers, Polarisation-centred, Low value-laden, Medium value-laden

Regression results model 3

	B	***S.E.***	***Wald***	***df***	***Sig.***	***Exp(B)***
Words	.000	.000	1.322	1	.250	1.000
Speakers	-.300	.058	26.312	1	.000	.661
Polarisation-centred	-.618	.338	3.332	1	.068	.539
Low value-laden	.160	.558	.083	1	.774	1.174
Medium value-laden	-.176	.453	.150	1	.698	.839
Interaction pol-low	1.299	.807	2.593	1	.107	3.666
Interaction pol-medium	-.041	.391	.011	1	.916	.959
Constant	4.186	.536	60.925	1	.000	65.761

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Words, Speakers, Polarisation-centred, Low value-laden, Medium value-laden, Interaction pol-low, Interaction pol-medium

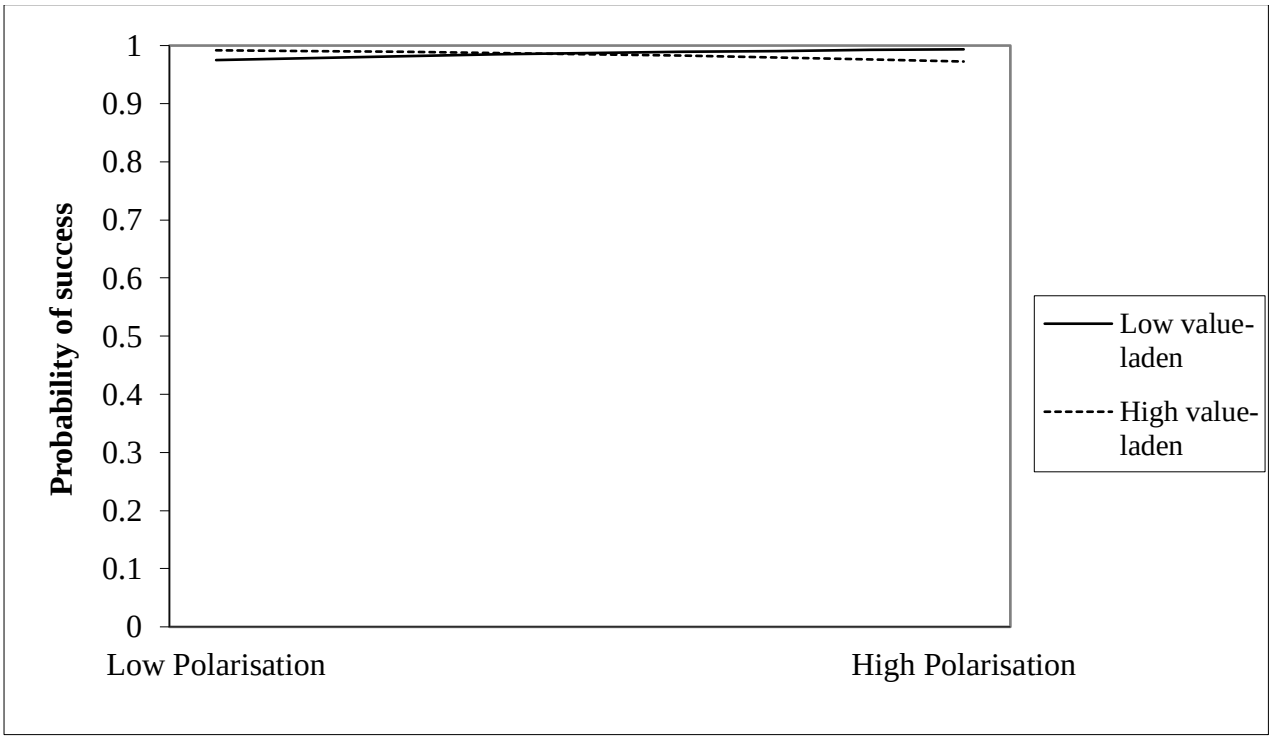
Lastly, the control variable Speakers did indicate a significant negative effect ($p < .000$, $B = -.300$), meaning that apart from the effect of polarisation on strategic consensus. Number of unique Speakers therefore influence unanimous decisions in a negative way, in contrast to number of Words that did not reach significance.

To illustrate the moderation effect of value-ladenness, an interaction plot was generated using the coefficients from the logistic regression seen in Figure 1. Although the interaction plot visually shows minimal divergence between lines, this is due to the overall high predicted probabilities of consensus in the model (constant $B = 4.186$). The interaction between polarisation and value-ladenness remains meaningful, but its influence is compressed within a narrow range near the ceiling of 100% agreement. As shown in Figure 1, the probability of reaching a unanimous decision decreases for highly value-laden topics as polarisation

increases, while it slightly increases for low value-laden topics. Interestingly, under conditions of low polarisation, high value-laden topics are more likely to result in consensus than low value-laden ones. Suggesting that polarisation reverses the relative impact of issue salience on consensus.

Figure 1

Moderation plot



4.1 | Robustness

In order to evaluate the stability and generalisability of the main findings, multiple robustness checks were performed. These included a log-transformation of the independent variable polarisation, an alternative dictionary for data extraction and comparison across logistic and OLS models. Each test was designed to assess whether the observed interaction between polarisation, value-ladenness and consensus remained consistent across analytical choices.

4.1.1 | Log-transformation

Although the logistic regression in the original model indicated a good fit with the data $\chi^2(6) = 73.713$, $p < .001$, indicating that the model significantly improves upon the null model. Moreover, the Nagelkerke R^2 suggests moderate explanatory power, and the non-significant Hosmer & Lemeshow test indicates good model calibration. Polarisation exhibited significant positive skew (2.173) and kurtosis (7.249), violating the assumptions of linearity in the logit.

To correct for this, this robustness check applied a natural log transformation to the uncentred polarisation variable, adding a constant of 1 to avoid undefined values. The transformed variable was then mean-centred for interaction analysis. This approach follows standard practice for handling skewed continuous predictors in logistic regression. As a result, (Appendix 3) shows better skewness and kurtosis values for the new model. This new logistic regression model assessed the effects of polarisation (log-transformed and mean-centred), value-ladenness and their interaction on the likelihood of reaching a unanimous decision, controlling for word count and number of speakers. The number of speakers showed a significant negative association with the outcome ($B = –0.298$, $p < .001$), indicating that each additional speaker reduced the odds of reaching consensus by approximately 26% ($Exp(B) = 0.743$). Log-transformed polarisation also had a significant negative effect ($B = –2.164$, $p = .035$), suggesting that higher levels of polarisation reduce the likelihood of consensus. The interaction between low value-ladenness and polarisation was significant ($B = 3.132$, $p = .047$), indicating that the negative effect of polarisation is reversed or weakened for topics perceived as low in value-ladenness. No significant effects were found for word count and medium value-ladenness. Medium value-laden topics presented a theoretically interesting, though statistically non-significant, trend across both the main and log-transformed model ($p = .916$; $p = .731$). The interaction terms suggest that medium value-laden issues may not promote consensus to the same extent as either high or low value-laden topics. This pattern hints at a possible curvilinear relationship, where medium-salient issues lack the moral clarity or procedural formality of highly salient topics, yet still invite emotional engagement. Creating a space, where affective conflict can emerge but go unmanaged. While not significant, this trend raises questions for future research on how ambiguity in issue salience shapes group dynamics and consensus formation. This log-transformation further supports the negative relation between polarisation and unanimous decision that was not conventionally significant in the main model.

4.1.2 | Different dictionary

In addition to the dictionary of Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker (2025), measuring polarisation through a combination of negative affect and delegitimization. This study also employs the dictionary options from LIWC within. The data extraction was generated on the general Dutch dictionary within LIWC made by Boot et al. (2017) based on Pennebaker et al. (2007). Measuring polarisation as a combination of affect, negative emotion, differences and affiliation. The polarisation score was than calculated by summing up the scores on affect, negative emotion, differences and affiliation. With affect and affiliation getting their scores halved because they refer to the portion of political ideology and the scores of negative emotion and differences were used to determine the strength of polarisation, taking

inspiration from the strength and identification combination of DeBode et al. (2023). According to research, partisan identification has been identified as a strong predictor of individuals' policy attitudes and behaviours, reflecting the deep connection between political identity and organisational decision-making and social dynamics (Bartels, 2000, p. 36; Hetherington, 2001, p. 629; Swigart et al., 2020, p. 1078) and in this case it would be reframed to affiliation. Garcia et al. (2016, p. 8) demonstrated that emotionally charged content in online discussions increases users' arousal levels, regardless of whether the content is positive or negative. Furthermore, higher arousal significantly raises the likelihood that users will engage in the conversation. These findings support the idea that emotionally intense content, especially negative emotion, plays a critical role in fuelling participation and the spread of affect in digital spaces. Thus justifying the inclusion of negative affect as a meaningful strength component of polarisation.

The second dictionary and logistic regression demonstrates good overall fit, with a significant Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients ($\chi^2(7) = 68.217$, $p < .001$), a Nagelkerke R^2 of .305 indicating moderate explanatory power and a non-significant Hosmer and Lemeshow test ($p = .608$), suggesting good model calibration. Among the predictors, the number of Speakers had a significant negative effect on the likelihood of a unanimous decision ($B = –0.266$, $p < .001$), with each additional speaker reducing the odds of consensus by approximately 23% ($Exp(B) = 0.766$). Other predictors, including Polarisation (centred), Value-ladenness dummies and the interaction terms were not statistically significant at the .05 level. However, the interaction between polarisation and medium value-ladenness seen in (Appendix 3) approached significance ($B = –0.231$, $p = .052$). These results may hint at a curvilinear moderation pattern where the effect of polarisation on consensus varies across levels of value-ladenness, potentially being the strongest in medium-salience discussions. So these findings do not support the negative relation between polarisation and consensus but do provide some evidence towards the curvilinear moderation pattern.

4.1.3 | Percentage agreement instead of unanimous

An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was conducted to examine the effect of polarisation, value-ladenness and their interaction on percentage agreement (consensus), controlling for word count and number of speakers. The model was statistically significant overall, $F(7, 408) = 8.82$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 11.6% of the variance in consensus scores (Adjusted $R^2 = .116$). The Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.98 suggests no autocorrelation in the residuals. The predictors had the following effect. Speakers had a significant negative effect ($B = –0.005$, $p < .001$), indicating that as the number of speakers increased, consensus decreased. This aligns with earlier findings in the logistic model and

suggests that larger group discussions may hinder full agreement. Polarisation (centred) was not a significant predictor ($p = .332$), nor were the dummy variables for low and medium value-ladenness or their interaction terms with polarisation (all $p > .05$) suggesting no evidence of moderation in the model. Lastly, word count despite its correlation with speakers, was not significant ($p = .566$) and showed no adverse multicollinearity effects (VIFs < 3.3 for all variables) supporting its inclusion as a control.

The residuals had a mean of zero and showed acceptable variability (SD = .072). The standardized residuals ranged from –11.47 to +1.64, indicating a few strong negative residuals that may warrant closer inspection, although the model fit remains stable overall. The linear regression suggests that the number of speakers is a consistent and robust predictor of consensus, even when measured as a continuous percentage. However, polarisation, value-ladenness and their interactions do not significantly influence consensus levels in this model. These results diverge somewhat from the binary logistic model and may reflect differences in how extreme consensus (unanimous) versus gradual agreement behaves.

5.0 | Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of political polarisation on strategic consensus within decision-making boards. While prior research have tried to embark on the influence of polarisation on decision-making (Zhang et al., 2023; DeBode et al., 2023) both studies lack of direct insight into boardroom dynamics. Despite other studies shedding light on how political ideology affects executive perceptions and firm outcomes, these studies overlook the deep ideological divides political ideology can create. Therefore, a theoretical gap exists in understanding the interplay and conditions where political polarisation impedes or enables consensus within decision-making bodies. This study embarked on this research gap by empirically examining this interplay of polarisation and consensus, through the following research question. *"How does political polarisation within the board of the Dutch water management organisation affect strategic consensus in decision-making?"*

The findings suggest that while not conventionally significant over all models and robustness checks, polarisation does have a negative effect on the consensus forming process.

Therefore partially supporting that affective expressions such as “us vs them” of political group identity (Huddy & Yair, 2020, p. 292-294; McCoy & Somer, 2019) as measured through linguistic markers of negative affect and delegitimization (Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker, 2025) have the ability to disrupt decision outcomes in governance settings. Furthermore, the interaction between the salience or value-ladeness of topics and polarisation provides an interesting nuance. Namely the findings suggest that although not conventionally significant over all models and robustness checks, that polarisation is less harmful when topics are procedural or technical, possibly because these issues invoke less ideological commitment or affective intensity. This supports Hypothesis 2 and is consistent with image theory (Beach, 1990) which assumes that purely high-salient topics will induce normative value-images that dominate decision-making (Nelson, 2004; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). However, medium value-laden topics presented a surprising twist. The findings showed that medium salience had a more negative impact on achieving consensus than high-salience topics. Showing a possible curvilinear relationship, where the effect of polarisation on consensus varies across different levels of value-ladenness, enhancing our view of issue framing. Since polarisation can have effects on the quality of conversation and reaching consensus, detecting polarisation in discussions should be crucial to make sure that emotions do not interfere with the objective goal of the discussion at hand. In sum, this thesis contributes to the literature by empirically linking affective polarisation to the dysfunction of political boards and extending the group-based understanding of political polarisation to the domain of public governance. It shows that consensus is not only a function of shared interests or policy alignment but also dependent on the emotional and identity-driven dynamics that underlie deliberation. These insights open the door for further inquiries into how institutional design and facilitation practices might mitigate the effects of polarisation in decision-making bodies.

5.1 | Theoretical contributions: Political science

The study makes several theoretical contributions. First, it advances the methodological tool set of political science by stepping away from the often used two-party system of the U.S. Using polarisation inferred from language model transcends the differences between multi-party systems and two-party systems. Acknowledging that European political systems particularly those based on proportional representation tend to produce more fluid and varied coalitions and therefore cannot always be seen similar to U.S. based systems (Lijphart, 1999). Theorising polarisation directly from language through advanced language models, the study also transcends the issue-based dichotomy, contrasting issue-driven polarisation with behavioural polarisation (Mason, 2013). Firstly by capturing real-time behavioural polarisation through negative emotional expressions and delegitimization (Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker, 2025) manifested in conversational dynamics. Secondly, issue driven

polarisation is taken into account by controlling for value-laden topics. This empirically rooted linguistic approach provides a nuanced understanding of affective polarisation driving disagreement, beyond what issue content alone can reveal. Thus, the methodological update aligns with the theoretical view that polarisation encompasses affective and identity-driven dynamics, enabling a more comprehensive and context-sensitive analysis of political conversations within governance bodies and multi-party systems. Therefore advancing our understanding of deliberative decision-making by proposing a more nuanced view that integrates both structural (polarisation) and semantic (value-ladenness) dimensions. This finding suggests that not all polarisation is equally problematic. Following from the moderation plot it can be assumed that when issues are low in value-ladenness, polarisation may even stimulate richer discussions that result in consensus rather than inhibit it.

5.2 | Theoretical contributions | Psychological science

For social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and its importance to the formation of intragroup solidarity between ideological factions and outgroup disdain. This study uses the delegitimization measure of Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker (2025), to measure this outgroup disdain since “political polarisation involves self-identification and social comparison processes that frame cognitive appraisals and intergroup emotions, ultimately influencing behaviours aimed at protecting the in-group or attacking the out-group, which is affective polarisation” (Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker, 2025). This study is the first one to replicate the dictionary for the Dutch language adding towards the deployment and measurement of affective polarisation based of this dictionary, in multiple languages and different context.

5.3 | Practical contribution

The main contribution of this thesis is the identification and confirmation of the role of affect and social identity for political polarisation and how these can influence strategic consensus. This is also the finding with the greatest societal implications. If affect and social identity are the main drivers of polarisation, and not ideological and policy positions, society should watch out for people and political movements that play on people’s affective reactions and group identities to gain power. Thus, by understanding better how affective reactions and social identity salience are evoked, one might find ways to counteract the detrimental effects of polarisation. Also the possible curvilinear relationship where the effect of polarisation on consensus varies across levels of value-ladenness is important to take into account. Because these medium topics can lack the moral clarity or procedural formality of highly salient topics, yet still invite emotional engagement. Therefore advising decision makers to be aware of medium value-laden topics and the levels of polarisation that may arise. This

could involve using neutral facilitators, clearer issue framing or implementing structured deliberation formats for topics with potential ideological ambiguity.

5.4 | Limitations

A methodological limitation stems from the LIWC-driven dictionary from Garzón-Velandia & Pennebaker (2025) being translated into Dutch. While this translation was necessary to analyse Dutch-language transcripts, such adaptations may cause lexical discrepancies. Words translated across other languages may not mean the same thing relative to cultural discrepancies and grammatical variances, therefore capturing emotional tone differently. For example, Boot et al. (2017, p. 67) note that homonymy words, words with the same spelling but differing meanings, were the most common problem of translating. Thus, word valence and context in Dutch may not be as polarising as it is in English. As a result, the operationalisation of polarisation may have suffered from reduced construct validity. Contributing to the model's the moderate explanatory power, however the Hosmer & Lemeshow test being non-significant indicated a good of fit.

Another limitation beyond dictionary translation or validation is that the model had relatively low explanatory power for any non-unanimous cases. While unanimous decisions were predicted with high certainty, the model failed when it came to predicting dissent or non-unanimous cases. Moreover, the influence of informal coalitions as suggested by Mithani & O'Brien (2020), was not directly measured due to the political setting. In the setting of waterboards, these political parties are already available and visible. Capturing dynamic coalition patterns in future qualitative or network-based analyses could offer a more granular understanding of how ideological alignment interacts with issue framing and strategic decision-making in corporate boardrooms where these affiliations or group identities are less visible.

5.5 | Future research

Future research should invest in quantifying valence scores for emotions through the valence x potency model suggested by Fontaine et al. (2007), allowing for the assessment of how excessive or extreme attitudes are. Considering that LIWC currently does not make a difference between negative emotions such as anger and fear, or differences between dislike or hate, which are not similar in their extremeness. This would require a native lexicon with emotional words that have their valence rated.

Appendix 1

Code	Description	Examples
1 = low	Administrative or technical issues with no visible political or ideological dimension	Water quantity, water safety, digitalisation
2 = medium	Topics with potential social or environmental implications but low political contestation	Water quality, taxes & finance
3 = high	Explicitly ideological or contentious policy decisions	Climate, sustainability, governance, education

*When an agenda topics has been assigned multiple agenda topics the highest score of those topics will be given

Appendix 2

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Log_polarisation	416	.5053	.4598	0.514	-.212

Appendix 3

	B	*S.E.*	*Wald*	*df*	*Sig.*	*Exp(B)*
Words	.000	.000	.609	1	.435	1.000
Speakers	-.266	.054	23.953	1	.000	.766
Polarisation (centred)	-.021	.046	.202	1	.653	.979
Low value-laden	.358	.535	.448	1	.504	1.430
Medium value-laden	.008	.435	.000	1	.986	1.008
Interaction pol-low	-.088	.196	.200	1	.654	.916
Interaction pol-medium	-.231	.119	3.791	1	.052	.793
Constant	3.803	.459	68.560	1	.000	44.827

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Words, Speakers, Polarisation (centred), Low value-laden, Medium value-laden, Interaction pol-low, Interaction pol-medium

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