

Media platforming and the normalisation of extreme right views

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Abstract

As far-right views become increasingly socially acceptable, the conditions under which democratic institutions, including the media, contribute to this normalisation process, and how journalists can counter it, remain unclear. Drawing on two pre-registered, placebo-controlled survey experiments that use the real-world audio of interviews with extreme right activists in Australia and the UK, we test if media platforming fuels agreement with extreme right views. We find that exposure to uncritical interviews on TV channels like Sky News or on online platforms like YouTube increases agreement with extreme right statements and perceptions that a larger share of the population shares these views. Interviewer strategy matters, but even critical interviewing does not appear to negatively affect support for extreme right statements versus the placebo: while interviewers who challenge the accuracy of false statements tarnish the actor's image and mitigate effects on descriptive norm perceptions, the latter still materialise at a lower rate.

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Introduction

The far right's growing electoral success has been accompanied by the mainstreaming and normalisation of their actors and ideas (Valentim, 2021; Bischof and Wagner, 2019). While the normalisation of populist radical right parties has been ongoing for decades (Mudde, 2019), the Overton window is currently pushed further to the right: extreme right activists, who openly advocate for violence and operate outside the democratic constitutional consensus, are increasingly receiving exposure online and on mainstream media platforms. Some of them push ideas related to white supremacy and conspiracy theories such as the "great replacement theory".

The entry of far right actors into mainstream politics poses important dilemmas for democratic organisations and institutions, such as mainstream parties (Meguid, 2005; Krause, Cohen, and Abou-Chadi, 2023; Chou et al., 2021) and media outlets. Should they engage with far right actors or avoid providing exposure to their ideas? While there is empirical evidence that accommodating strategies by mainstream political parties contribute to the mainstreaming of the far right (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020; Krause, Cohen, and Abou-Chadi, 2023), there is much less theory and evidence about the role that the media, both traditional media (e.g., TV channels and newspaper) and online media platforms, play in spreading and normalising extreme ideas.

With the ownership of many media outlets concentrated in the hands of wealthy conservative entrepreneurs (Foos and Bischof, 2022; Grossman, Margalit, and Mitts, 2022)¹, extreme right actors are increasingly given a platform to air their controversial views. Conservative media platforms (e.g., Fox News, GB News) showcase extreme actors, while mainstream networks (e.g., CNN and the BBC) claim to invite them to challenge and scrutinise their extreme viewpoints. This includes not only far-right politicians such as Marine Le Pen or Donald Trump, but also increasingly more extreme fringe actors with no democratic legit-

¹As an example, only three companies—DMG Media, News UK and Reach—dominate 90% of the national newspaper market in the UK (MRC, 2021).

imacy, who are given a platform to comment on events. Similar extreme content is also freely broadcast on the internet and popularised on online platforms such as YouTube, reaching millions of views (Álvarez-Benjumea and Winter, 2018; Munger and Phillips, 2020). Research on social media reveals that de-platforming extreme right activists, such as after the US Capitol storming on January 6, leads to a reduction of exposure (Rauchfleisch and Kaiser, 2021; Buntain et al., 2023), but little is known about the attitudinal effects of platforming such actors in the first place. While studies show a correlation between social media use and anti-Muslim attitudes (Lajevardi, Oskooii, and Walker, 2022), the specific mechanism is unknown.

We contribute to the growing literature on the mainstreaming and normalisation of the far right by exploring a specific mechanism through which exposure to far right ideas happens in everyday life: Media interviews that are broadcast on TV channels and on online platforms. While research has explored the impact of TV networks like Fox News and tabloids like the British Sun on right-wing attitudes (Arceneaux et al., 2016; Broockman and Kalla, 2022; Foos and Bischof, 2022), political scientists have only recently started to investigate *how* media channels disseminate right-wing views, for instance via "selective partisan media exposure" (Broockman and Kalla, 2022). We also contribute to the growing literature that looks at the effects of media portrayal of immigrants and refugees on political attitudes (Lo and Lang, 2023; Lajevardi, 2021).

We show that media exposure to interviews with extreme right actors² and exposure to their anti-immigration views, on either TV or online channels, leads to higher agreement with extreme right statements and beliefs about their viability in the population. To do that, we draw on two distinct, but similar, real-life interviews with extreme right activists that were broadcast on Sky News in Australia and the United Kingdom (UK). Relying on a series of carefully designed audio experiments based on these real-life interviews, we com-

²Going forward we use the term "extreme right" instead of "radical right" since the interviewed actors refer to claims that are opposed to aspects of liberal democracies (like minority rights) and legitimise anti-democratic attitudes and the use of violence to pursue the actors' ideological aims.

bine increased realism with control over the treatments that study participants are exposed to, and the ability to debrief participants after exposure. Using factorial designs, we vary whether participants listen to the audio of interviews, or to neutral content, a weather report. The second experimental factor varies whether the platform which broadcasts the interview/forecast is a traditional mainstream TV channel (e.g. Sky News)³ or an online platform (e.g. YouTube).

We find consistent evidence in line with pre-registered expectations across both countries: Unchallenged interviews with extreme right actors do not lead to rejection, but rather fuel extreme right attitudes and foster the belief that a larger share of the public support the extreme right actors' statements. The media strategy adopted by the journalist appears crucial, as uncritical platforming spreads and normalises extreme right views. When we randomly assign the interviewer to robustly challenge the extreme right actor in the British interview, the reputation of the actor decreases and effects on attitudes subside. Nevertheless, even critical interviews do not lead participants to move away from the actor's statements. Moreover, participants continue to update their beliefs about the viability of these views, albeit at a lower rate.

Contrary to our pre-registered expectation, our study also shows that exposure to extreme right actors on the online platform YouTube has a similar effect on attitudes and norms as platforming extreme right actors on the traditional mainstream TV channel Sky News. This effect is observed in both Australia, where Sky News has a slightly more conservative tilt, and in the UK, where it does not. Therefore, our results suggest that radicalisation through platforming is driven by increased exposure to extreme right actors and their views rather than any added legitimacy conveyed by mainstream TV channels over online streaming platforms.

Beyond its theoretical and empirical contributions, this paper has policy implications with regards to the platforming of extreme right actors on various media outlets. Across

³By traditional media, we mean mainstream and conservative media that reach a large audience and can have a higher level of reputation than alternative online platforms

two different contexts, in well-powered experiments, exposing people to extreme right actors' views did not lead to a decrease in public support for those views. It consistently led people to believe that a larger share of the population agreed with such views. Amidst rampant consumption of extremist content on social media and its rise on traditional media, these findings have significant implications for researchers, politicians, and journalists alike.

Theory

The role of the media in the normalisation of extreme right views and actors

The role of the media has often been mentioned in relation to the growing presence of extreme right actors and ideas in mainstream political discourse (Mudde, 2019; DeJonge, 2019). Giving a platform to an extreme right actor has become more commonplace, making extreme right discourse more widespread and available to audiences. The effect of the media on the radicalisation of public opinion remains, however, theoretically unclear. It is commonly agreed that media attention matters in increasing citizens' interest in a given topic (Ellinas, 2010).⁴ Quasi-experiments, which have identified whether media outlets sway citizens' opinions and if so, in which direction, often treat media (non-) exposure as a black-box (Foos and Bischof, 2022; Grossman, Margalit, and Mitts, 2022; DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Ladd and Lenz, 2009). Survey experiments that identify the effects of exposure to different arguments find that individuals update their attitudes in the direction of the argument (Coppock, 2023; Guess and Coppock, 2018). Moreover, experiments that vary whether individuals are exposed to one-sided or two-sided frames show that one-sided frames are more effective at swaying public opinion, while two-sided frames, when they are equally strong, are likely to cancel each other out (Druckman, 2004, 2001; Chong and Druckman, 2007).

Yet, one may wonder whether these findings apply equally to all types of messages and

⁴The literature on the far right has emphasised the importance of media visibility of far right political actors in their political success. By making issues of immigration and crime salient, the media also create a political environment conducive to the rise of radicalism.

messengers, or if there is heterogeneity in how individuals respond based on the type of message and messenger that they encounter. A majority of people may be willing to reject extreme right arguments based on their political predispositions (Zaller, 1992). In that sense, when individuals are exposed to extreme right content, those who are sympathetic to extreme right views (i.e. authoritarian individuals) would be even more supportive of such views whereas those who normally reject them (i.e. liberal individuals) would oppose these views even more. This directly relates to what scholars call the backlash thesis which posits that, when individuals are exposed to counter-attitudinal evidence, their pre-existing opinions and beliefs are not challenged, but strengthened (Kunda, 1990; Taber and Lodge, 2006). Despite its theoretical relevance, the backlash hypothesis has lately received little empirical support (Guess and Coppock, 2018; Bishin et al., 2016; Coppock, 2023), even when strong partisan cues are present (Tappin, Berinsky, and Rand, 2023). Another argument for why individuals might reject extreme right messages is that there still exist strong social norms that make such views undesirable. Social norms are shared standards of acceptable behaviour which individuals learn over time and in a dynamic fashion (Paluck, Shepherd, and Aronow, 2016; Tankard and Paluck, 2017). However, such norms have been eroding quickly in recent years (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin, 2020).

Key events such as Trump's 2016 victory in the US presidential election or the entry of extreme right legislators into parliament have changed social norms by signalling that radical right views have become normatively desirable in society (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin, 2020; Valentim, 2021; Bischof and Wagner, 2019). Once extreme right actors entered the White House or a national parliament, social norms have moved in the direction of favouring these extreme right views and actors. Extreme right attitudes and actors which used to be socially sanctioned (as norm defiers/stigmatised), are now more socially accepted. Hence, individuals might perceive extreme right views as new social norms when the latter are accompanied by a strong signal like the platforming of an actor on media channels. Indeed, media platforming may be directly related to the ongoing normalisation of extreme

right views. The parliamentary entry of extreme right actors is, for instance, likely both a function and a cause of increased media coverage, especially since gaining more seats leads to increased media coverage (Dunn and Singh, 2011), as well as more frequent and better access to public broadcasters. Thus, we expect that media platforming further normalises extreme right views in society, sending a signal that more citizens than assumed subscribe to these views.

Furthermore, media coverage may not only provide a stage from which to spread and normalise extreme right views, but it may also increase the legitimacy of extreme right actors by portraying what appears to be politically viable and respectable actors. Through platforming, the media confer “legitimacy and authority to political newcomers and (...) dispel voter doubts about their electoral viability” (Ellinas, 2010). Since extreme right actors are usually marginalised in the political game, offering them a voice gives them the impression that they have a mass following and that they are the voice of the people. Media coverage can also make up for their organisational deficiencies and financial shortages by helping them become known, thus helping leaders of small organisations (Ellinas, 2010). Mainstreaming extreme right discourse is a political resource that can lift marginalised actors from obscurity and push them into the political mainstream. That is why the media can be seen as playing a role in the process of spreading and normalising extreme right views, as well as contributing to the increased respectability of extreme right actors.

Based on these theoretical considerations we preregistered the following hypotheses on OSF:

- **Persuasion and normalisation hypothesis** : *Subjects who are exposed to an extreme right actor’s interview are more likely to a) agree with the views expressed in the interview, b) perceive that the rest of the population will agree with these views, and c) perceive that the actor is more respectable.*

The moderating role of platform type and journalist media strategy

We also examine two conditions under which exposure to an extreme right interview can further amplify those attitudinal and normalisation effects: the type of platform and the media strategies adopted by the journalists.

First, extreme right arguments can receive more approval if they are conveyed on a platform which has a credible reputation. Studies have highlighted the importance that media reputations play in public opinion: trustworthy outlets with well-established reputations and high popularity are more likely to positively influence opinion than outlets viewed as non-mainstream (Druckman, 2001; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Miller and Krosnick, 2000). While issue frames from an untrustworthy news source have been shown to be ineffective, the same frames that are shared by a trustworthy source can affect public opinion (Druckman, 2001; Chong and Druckman, 2007). We define a credible platform as a traditional media outlet that is known to the public and can reach a large audience (e.g. Sky News), and distinguish it to an online platform that can be unknown to people (e.g. a YouTube Channel). While the public has a good sense of the media's overall trustworthiness of well-known traditional outlets such as CNN or Fox News in the US or Sky News in Australia and the UK (our case studies) (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Peterson and Allamong, 2022), it is more difficult to assess the credibility of online outlets given the wide array of options in the digital media landscape (Hindman, 2008; Metzger and Medders, 2010). The number of online options individuals can encounter far exceeds the number of sources they are aware of, making it impossible for them to discern which online option is credible. This, of course, does not mean that all online platforms are not credible, but that online platforms do not have clear public reputations. An interview presented on a traditional media platform would thus be assigned more credibility compared to one featured on an online platform. We therefore preregistered the following hypothesis:

- **Platform type hypothesis:** *Subjects are more likely to a) increase support for the views expressed in the interview, b) perceive that a larger proportion*

of the population shares the views expressed in the interview and c) perceive the extreme right actor as respectable if the interview is broadcast by a mainstream platform compared to a non-mainstream platform.

Moreover, the media strategies adopted by journalists could further impact the support and normalisation of extreme right views and actors. The question of whether it is most effective to ignore, accommodate, or challenge the far right is one that political scientists have been investigating since the far right's emergence on the political scene (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020; Meguid, 2005). Journalists can choose between a variety of strategies when it comes to dealing with extreme right actors, ranging from (1) demarcation to (2) accommodation and (3) confrontation (DeJonge, 2019; Meguid, 2005). First, journalists can opt to disengage with the actor by refusing to platform them, which is a way to isolate them. This demarcation strategy has become rare over the past two decades as there are few cases where far right actors are completely ignored (DeJonge, 2019). The second strategy involves accommodating extreme right actors by offering them a platform to spread their views without directly engaging with them. The journalist gives the extreme right actors an implicit endorsement by making issues that are typically pushed by such actors more visible (e.g. immigration, nationalism, crime) (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009) or by incorporating some of their rhetoric in their news coverage (e.g. by focusing on the "silent majority"). This accommodative strategy is likely to amplify the persuasion and normalisation effects of these views.

By contrast, the journalist can adopt a confrontational strategy by being critical towards the extreme right actor. This demarcation strategy means that the journalist can point to the inaccuracy of the statements made and/or by raising normative concerns (e.g. stressing that the extreme right actor is violating the freedom of religion by adopting anti-Islam positions). We may therefore assume that a journalist who challenges an extreme right actor would undermine the credibility of the actor's views and image. Discrediting extreme right actor's statements and image could weaken persuasion and normalisation effects on the public,

especially since fact-checking is known to reliably improve factual belief accuracy (Chan et al., 2017; Wood and Porter, 2019). We therefore preregistered the following hypothesis:

- **Media strategy hypothesis** : *Subjects are more likely to a) increase support for the views expressed in the interview, b) perceive that a larger proportion of the population shares the views expressed in the interview and c) perceive the extreme right actor as respectable if the journalist does not challenge the extreme right actor.*

Research Design

Strategies to identify the causal effects of media exposure on political outcomes include field experimental (Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan, 2009; Broockman and Kalla, 2022) and quasi-experimental designs (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007; Martin and Yurukoglu, 2017; Foos and Bischof, 2022; Grossman, Margalit, and Mitts, 2022). Randomised survey experiments have been used to test mechanisms of media influence such as priming and framing (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Maier and Rittberger, 2008; De Vreese, Boomgaarden, and Semetko, 2011; Druckman, 2001). Survey experiments have the advantage of increasing the control that researchers can exercise over exposure to specific messages. While some of these experiments use student or self-selected samples, others use population-based samples (Mutz, 2011). Our study stands in the latter tradition, but increases environmental and external validity by a) exploiting two similar real-life interviews with two extreme right political actors and b) conducting two large population-based survey experiments on representative samples of the Australian and British populations.

Case studies

In this study, we rely on two separate interviews with extreme right actors that were broadcast on Sky News Australia and Sky News UK in 2018, when both channels were part of

Rupert Murdoch's media empire.⁵ Fielding the same experiment in two countries allows us to address questions of external validity by using two countries with similar extreme right actors, TV channels and treatment conditions. At the same time, these two countries have relatively different shares of conservative media. Although Murdoch's News corp empire exists in both countries, it is even more prevalent in Australia than in the UK. Murdoch built his media corporation in Australia and owns 65 per cent of the country's print media, five popular radio programs and a large online news and social media base. By contrast, Murdoch owns 32.2 per cent of the UK's newspaper, radio stations and television channels (MRC, 2021). As a result, Sky News Australia is slightly more conservative than Sky News UK, and this is perceived by the respondents in our experiments since respondents perceive Sky News UK to be more "mainstream" than Sky News Australia (3.37 vs 4 on a 1-5 scale).⁶

The Australian interview

On August 4, 2018, Sky News Australia aired a ten-minute interview⁷ with the former United Patriots Front leader, the extreme right activist, Blair Cottrell. He advocated in favour of both skills-based and "culture-based" migration where Australia should not accept immigrants who were "too culturally dissimilar to Australia". Cottrell also associated the rise of criminality with an increase of "African gangs". He finally promoted his Lads Society, a men-only social club involving regular meetings, and encouraged male-viewers to join him. Within hours of the interview going on air and being shared on various Sky News social media platforms, the channel removed the interview from its repeat time slots and online platforms. The broadcast also prompted the interviewer to resign from Sky News, as he adopted an accommodating media approach and refrained from challenging Cottrell's claims. This led to a public apology from the channel. The segments that are used in the Australian experiment

⁵Sky News UK has since been sold to the US firm Comcast.

⁶This is also confirmed by the higher levels of support towards extreme right beliefs among the control groups in Australia compared to the UK. See Figure 1.

⁷A recording of the interview is available on YouTube via the following link: <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QWmbNFmWMS4&t=455s>.

include Cottrell's views on skilled and race-based immigration, his association of criminality with "African gangs" and his promotion of his political organisation, the "Lads Society".

The British interview

On September 27, 2018, Sky News UK broadcast segments of an interview with the former co-founder and leader of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson. The extreme right activist spoke after being released from prison for being found guilty of contempt of court in May 2017 for trying to film and expressing views about suspects in a sexual grooming case in Canterbury. During the one-hour interview⁸, Robinson also shared his views on typical extreme right themes: Islam, immigration and terrorism. He notably praised the temporary halt of the construction of mosques and advocated for the introduction of a "Trump-style" travel ban to restrict the number of refugees from "failed states" because he associated refugees with terrorist attacks. Robinson claimed that "less people will be murdered" and "less girls would be raped" if a travel ban would be introduced. These segments are comparable to the extreme right claims Blair Cottrell made during his interview. However, unlike the Australian experiment, Robinson was challenged by the journalist a few times. The journalist pointed towards normative concerns for violating basic principles of democracy, but also raised the inaccuracy of Robinson's claims. He not only told Robinson that temporarily stopping the construction of mosques is "a violation of people's freedom of religion, of worship", but he also questioned Robinson multiple times about the credibility of his sources on terrorism and Islam. For instance, the journalist asked Robinson "Where is your source for that?" after Robinson wrongfully claimed that the majority of rapes are committed by immigrants. The segments used in the British experiment include Robinson's views on the building of mosques, a Trump-style travel ban, as well as him associating terrorist attacks and rape with refugees. The Australian and British interviews slightly differ in their content: The topics and the outgroup that is targeted by the extreme right activist

⁸The whole interview is available on YouTube via the following link https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=pjz_Fg1TEBo.

is not the same, as Cottrell targets Black Africans, while Robinson targets Muslims and refugees. The topics discussed pertain to the extreme right discourse in each country. Both the comprehensive critical version of the Sky News interview with Robinson and a version that excludes the interviewer’s challenges are used in the experiment to closely resemble the interview style that was used in the Cottrell interview on Sky News Australia. The full transcripts of the interviews and weather reports in Australia and the UK are available in Appendix Section D.

Experimental Design

In our experiments, we use the audio recording of these two interviews. One of the main reasons for this choice is that the quality of the videos uploaded on YouTube is not very high.⁹ Relying solely on the audio recording allows us to direct respondents’ focus towards the spoken content and the effect of the explicitly announced media platform, eliminating any potential distractions arising from visual cues of the extreme right actors and interviewers.

In order to minimise potential harms to participants from exposure to the interviews and from any questionable statements made during the interviews, we debrief them in full directly after outcome data collection. While this choice prevents us from collecting long-term outcome data, we believe that it is necessary from an ethical point of view to correct any misinformation provided. We discuss our approach to debriefing participants in detail in Ethics Appendix B, where we also provide all information, consent and debriefing documents. Both experiments received full ethics review and were approved by our institution’s Research Ethics Committee under references 1050 and 92361.

Main factors in the experiment

In both experiments, we use a factorial design, a 2x2 design in the Australian case, and a 3x2 design in the British case. The first factor varies the content that is broadcast. In

⁹We were unable to obtain the original video footage of the interviews from Sky News Australia or Sky News UK.

the Australian case, we vary whether participants are exposed to the unchallenged interview with the extreme right activist or to a weather report, and in the British case, we replicate the first two categories and add a third one: A version of the interview, where the extreme right actor is challenged by the interviewer. This addition allows us to test the effect of the interviewer’s strategy on extreme right beliefs and norms. While we use the exact same segments for the two groups that listen to the unchallenged and challenged interview in the British case, those in the ‘challenged interview’ group also hear the journalist’s responses and criticism of Robinson’s claims. We use a weather report as the placebo condition because we assume the content to be neutral compared to the interview.

The second experimental factor is the same across both experiments: A presenter announces at the start and the end of the segment that the interview is/was either broadcast on Sky News or on the presenters’ YouTube channel. An Australian and a British native speaker were recruited to announce the platform on which the interview and weather report were allegedly broadcast at the start and the end of the audio clip. These additions to the clip were meant to ensure that subjects understood the platform on which the interview or weather report was broadcast. Regarding the platform, even though some people may use YouTube as their main source of information, we consider YouTube to be less heavily regulated, and hence more likely to platform extreme content, especially on the extreme right. Indeed, YouTube is a space, where extremism, hate speech and hostility are not uncommon (Munger and Phillips, 2020; Ghayda et al., 2018). It is popular among right-leaning users and studies have shown that YouTube is an attractive platform for people and organisations with extreme right views to recruit, organise and radicalise others (Alvares and Dahlgren, 2016; Reeve, 2019). YouTube’s recommendation system also enables extreme right channels to be discovered (Ribeiro et al., 2021). The Australian recordings last between 1.40 (placebo) to 2.30 minutes and the British recordings last between 1.30 (placebo) to 2.30 minutes. We display the factorial design of the experiments in table 1 below.

To ensure that respondents complied with the treatments, respondents could not skip

		Platform	
		<i>YouTube Channel</i>	<i>Sky News</i>
Content	<i>Weather Report</i>	Group 1	Group 2
	<i>Unchallenged Interview</i>	Group 3	Group 4
<i>UK only</i>	<i>Challenged Interview</i>	Group 5	Group 6

Table 1: Factorial design

through the respective segments. They had to listen to them in full. In both countries, dropout rates are not significantly different across experimental groups. They range from 85 to 126 dropouts in the Australian case, and from 146 to 154 dropouts in the British case.

Data collection and outcome measurement

We fielded the experiments on nationally representative samples of the Australian and British adult populations (N=5062 in Australia and N=5482 in the UK). Both experiments were administered by the high quality survey firm *Survation*. The Australian experiment was administered over two rounds between 1-9 December 2020 and 2-9 March 2022, and the British experiment was fielded from 21 July to 1 August 2022.¹⁰ This resulted in around 1,250 respondents per group in the Australian case and 950 respondents in the British case.

To test our hypotheses, the post-treatment surveys included multiple items measuring extreme right attitudes (4 items in the Australian experiment and 5 items in the British one), extreme right norms (4 items in the Australian experiment and 5 items in the British one), and the respectability of the actors (1 item per survey). Concerning extreme right attitudes, we asked respondents how much they agreed with each extreme right statement mentioned by the extreme right actor in the interview. We adapted the statements based on what each actor was talking about. Cottrell talked a lot about immigration and criminality, while Robinson focused more on terrorism and Islam. All items are highly correlated so we take the mean of the items and reweight the single item on a scale ranging from 0 to

¹⁰We ran a second wave of the same experiment with the same survey company to increase statistical power on the treatment-by-treatment interaction that we are attempting to identify and to provide manipulation checks. More information about the second wave and any small changes compared to wave one can be found here in the OSF repository.

1 (1 means that respondents fully agree with Cottrell’s/Robinson’s views). We present the results with the attitudinal scale in the main analysis but results are comparable for each item, as shown in Tables E.5 and E.7 in the Appendix.

The variable on extreme right norms relates to items that asked respondents to rate the percentage of Australians/British that agree with each of Cottrell’s/Robinson’s extreme right statements. This variable refers to descriptive norms that capture people’s perception of how society actually thinks about these statements. This variable, which has been traditionally used to measure social norms in existing studies (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin, 2020; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2021), differs from individual attitudes and how an individual thinks about these claims. Since all items are also highly correlated, we take the mean of the items and re-weight the single item on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 (1 means that respondents think 100% of Australians/British agree with Cottrell’s/Robinson’s views). We show the results of the scale in the main body, but findings are similar for each item (see Tables E.5 and E.8 in the Appendix).

Our last outcome variable asked respondents how respectable they think the extreme actor is on a 5-point scale. The question, which is the same in the Australian and the British experiments, is recoded into a categorical variable because there is some differential attrition as a function of the treatment, where respondents are less likely to answer "Don’t Know" in the interview conditions (see Table F.3 in the Appendix). Those who do not find the actor respectable take value 0, those who find him respectable take value 1 and those who don’t know take value 2. We then analyse this question using multinomial logistic regressions. We deviate from the pre-analysis plan as excluding "don’t knows" from this question could introduce bias into our estimates. We discuss this change and other minor changes to the pre-analysis plan in Appendix C.

Recorded pre-treatment covariates include gender, age, region, education, political ideology (authoritarian/libertarian attitudes) and vote in the 2019 general election. We also add a question in the British survey on whether respondents voted leave or remain in the

European Union in the 2016 referendum. Our treatment effects are estimated using OLS regression models with HC2 standard errors when we regress the attitudinal norms outcome on the experimental conditions. We deviate from our pre-analysis plan concerning the respectability question and use a multinomial logit regression in this case. We test all predictions in country-specific models without and with covariate adjustment¹¹. Results are consistent throughout and do not depend on model specifications. Additionally, we present our results with the full sample because our manipulation checks were successful (see Table F.2).

While both survey experiments are very well-powered and similar in substance, we made a few additions in the UK experiment, where we included additional manipulation and attention checks, and randomised the order of the outcome variables. We also added two secondary outcome variables in the British study. For more information on the changes that were made and the power analyses, see our pre-analysis plan of the British experiment. The questionnaires of the Australian and British experiments are displayed in Appendix documents A.5 and A.6.

Results

Interview effects on agreement with extreme right statements

Table 2 displays the results of platforming the extreme right actor on individuals' support for extreme right attitudes in Australia (models 1-4) and the United Kingdom (UK) (models 5-8). We find that respondents who listen to the unchallenged interview (as opposed to those who listen to the weather report) are more likely to conform to the actors' extreme right attitudes in both countries, regardless of the platform that is invoked. The effects are highly statistically significant across the board (at $p < 0.001$ significance level), comparable across the two countries and remain similar when we adjust for pre-treatment covariates. According

¹¹We present the results with all covariate coefficients in Tables E.1 and E.3 in the Appendix.

to Cohen’s criteria, this effect is small to medium in terms of size ($d=0.16$ standard deviations for Australia and $d=0.18$ for the UK). This effect is nonetheless substantive in this context as it means that the exposure prime in the unchallenged interview, compared to listening to the weather report, caused a 3 to 5%-points increase in individuals’ support for the actor’s extreme right positions voiced in the interview. This is substantively important given that the actors’ claims are extreme. Nonetheless, a large minority of Australians appear to agree with them. The direction and size of the effects are also comparable to those found in existing field and survey experiments that show the persuasive effects of media (Guess and Coppock, 2018; Guess et al., 2020), or campaign messages (Gerber et al., 2011; Coppock, 2023). Figure 1 displays bar charts including the mean level of agreement with the extreme right actors’ statements (scaled to range from 0 to 1) for each experimental group and 95% confidence intervals. In line with the ‘persuasion and normalisation’ hypothesis, unchallenged interviews shift participants attitudes further to the right. What is striking is that the base level of agreement with these statements does not seem to matter much. While more Australians agree with the statements in the placebo condition than Brits (around 1/3 of the population), effect sizes are comparable.

Table 2 provides further information on the conditions under which respondents may be more or less supportive of the extreme right claims expressed by the actor. First, we do not find that the type of platform conditions the way media interviews affect respondents’ positions on extreme right views. The effect of the type of platform, as well as the interaction between the interview and the platform, are small and non-significant across the board and in the two countries. Listening to the unchallenged interview on the YouTube channel may slightly increase the support towards extreme right attitudes as opposed to those who listen to the interview on Sky News, as Figure 1 suggests, but the difference is minimal and not significant. Although this finding goes against our expectations on the type of platform, it corroborates Peterson and Allamong (2022)’s study that shows that, conditional on exposure, unfamiliar news sources are as effective at shifting public opinion as familiar

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)			-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)
Constant	0.55*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.55*** (0.01)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.02)
Covariate adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.02	0.32	0.02	0.32	0.01	0.20	0.01	0.20
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.31	0.02	0.31	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.20
Observations	4585	4585	4585	4585	5482	5482	5482	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only).

We include a dummy variable in the Australian case to control for the two Australian waves.

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

Table 2: Extreme right attitudes

media with established reputations.

Additionally, we find that if the journalist challenges the extreme right activist, updating effects of the extreme right interview do not materialise. Indeed, Table 2 and Figure 1 show that British respondents who listen to the challenged interview are no more inclined to agree with extreme right positions than those who listen to the weather report, as the effect is non-significant and equal to zero in models 5-8. Moreover, the effect of the challenged interview is significantly different from the effect of the unchallenged interview (Table 2). This means that the journalist's critical questioning balances the effect of the extreme right activists' words. As In line with our pre-registered expectations, the effect of the interview on support for extreme right views is larger if the extreme right actor is not challenged by the journalist.

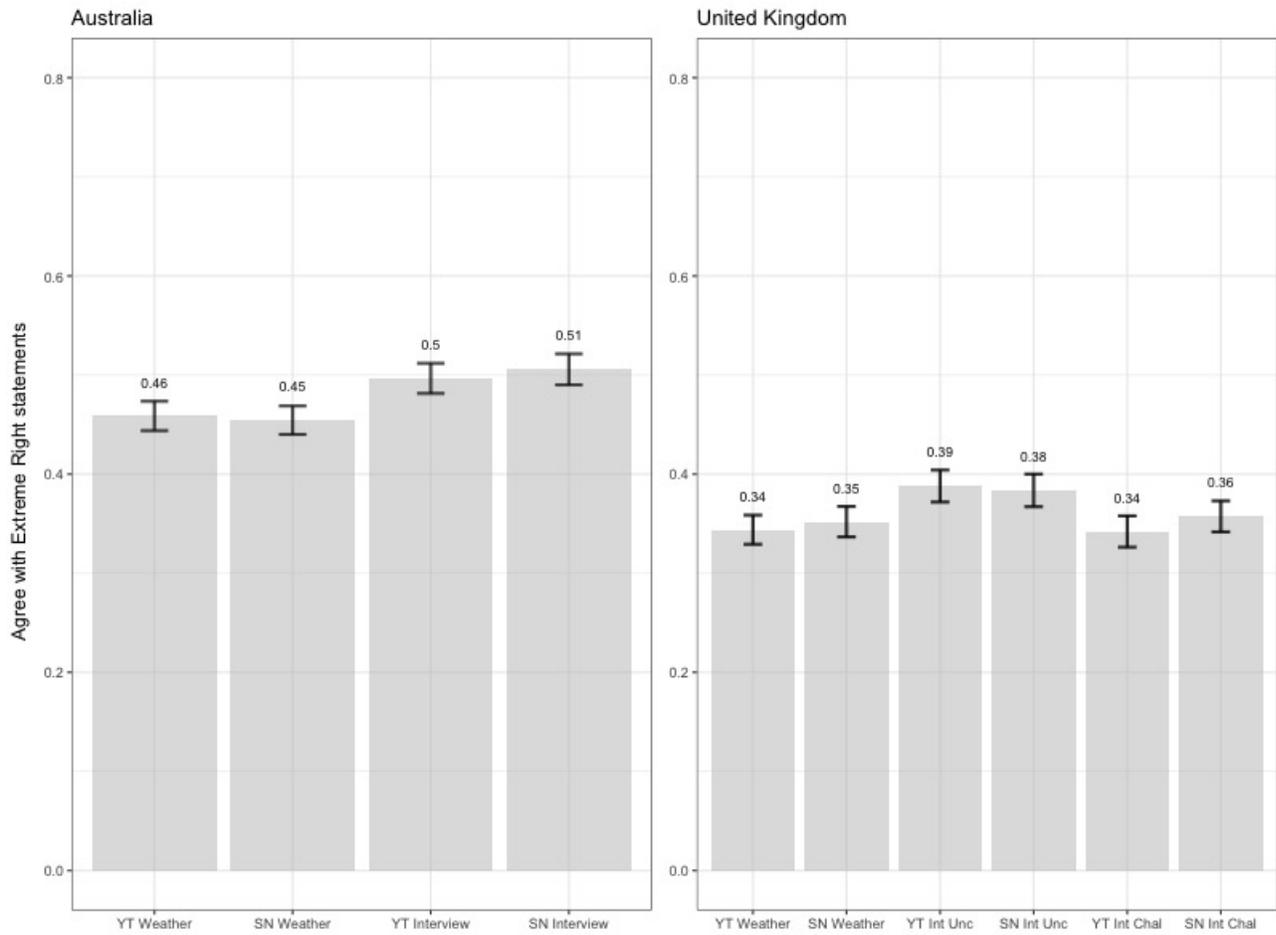


Figure 1: Mean levels of agreement with extreme right statements in Australia and the UK across experimental conditions. 95% confidence intervals

Interview effects on descriptive norms

We now check if exposure to an extreme right interview affect people’s perceptions of descriptive norms as they relate to extreme right statements. Table 3 and Figure 2 replicate the analyses on attitudes, but with a different dependent variable that asks respondents about the proportion of Australians/British they think agree with the statements. We find that respondents who listen to the unchallenged interview are more likely to think that society agrees more with these extreme right views than those who listen to the weather report, regardless of the platform. The effects are statistically significant at the 0.001 level in both countries. Listening to the unchallenged interview increases people’s belief that society has moved in favour of these extreme right views by 2-3%-points in Australia, and by 6%-points in the UK, as opposed to listening to the weather forecast. These effects translate into small to medium size effects in both countries ($d=0.16$ in Australia and $d=0.22$ in the UK), and are thus comparable in size to the effects we found on individuals’ approval of extreme right statements. Moreover, in the Australian case, the effect on normalisation is only significantly different from zero on the Sky News platform, although the interaction between the platform and the interview is not statistically significant. There is no suggestive evidence of an interaction between platform and interview in the British case. Overall, we do not find that descriptive norms are affected by the platform on which the interview was reported. Listening to the interview where a message is cueing a traditional mainstream platform as opposed to an alternative online platform does not increase people’s beliefs that society agrees with the claims promoted by the extreme right actor.

In line with our expectations, listening to the challenged interview attenuates the normalisation effect, but does not entirely reverse it. As shown in Table 2, the normalisation effect declines from 6%-points to 2%-points in substantive terms, but a 2%-point increase is still significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the unchallenged interview still causes a 2%-point increase over a baseline of 34% in people’s belief that society agrees with these extreme right views. This means that being exposed to an interview where the

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News (SN) Platform	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x SN platform			0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)			-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Challenged interview x SN platform							0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Constant	0.96*** (0.01)	0.70*** (0.03)	0.96*** (0.01)	0.71*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.17*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.03)
Covariate adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.58	0.63	0.58	0.63	0.01	0.13	0.01	0.13
Adj. R ²	0.58	0.63	0.58	0.63	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.12
Observations	4175	4175	4175	4175	4481	4481	4481	4481

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only).

We include a dummy variable in the Australian case to control for the two Australian waves.

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

Table 3: Descriptive norms

journalist adopts a confrontational stance towards the claims of the extreme right actor (as opposed to listening to a weather report), while not shifting attitudes, contributes to the normalisation of extreme right views. Still, the effect is significantly smaller compared to those who listen to the unchallenged interview where the interviewer adopts an accommodative media strategy.¹² While challenging the extreme right actor's claims is more effective than not challenging them at all, it does not fully reverse the normalisation process.

¹²Indeed, when we compare the challenged and unchallenged interview groups only, we find that those who listen to the challenged interview (especially those who listen to the interview on the YouTube Channel) think that a smaller percentage of people agree with extreme right views, as opposed to those who listen to the unchallenged interview (see Figure 2 and Table F.7 in the Appendix).

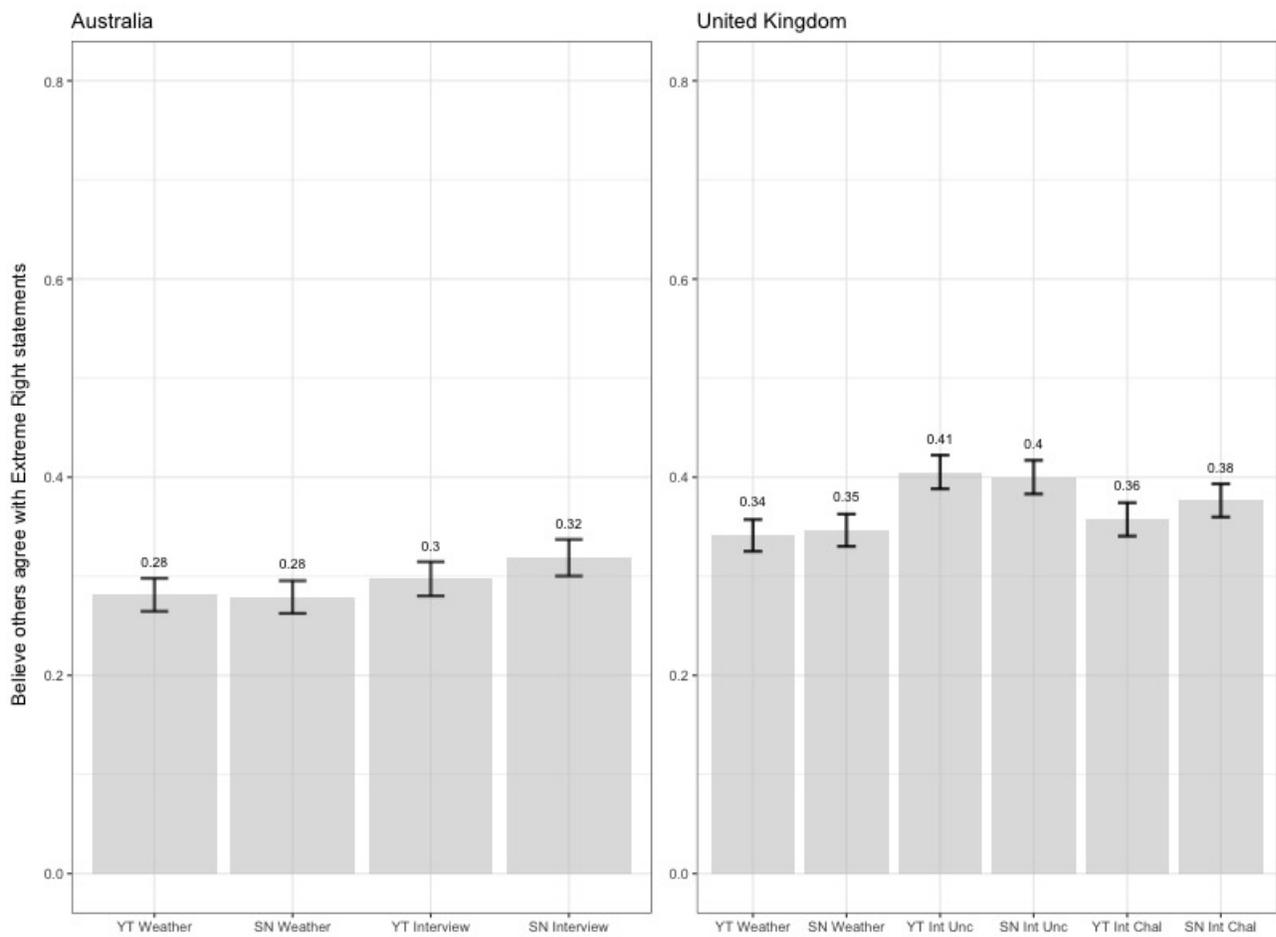


Figure 2: % of others perceived to agree with actor's extreme right statements in Australia and the UK across experimental conditions. 95% confidence intervals

Interview effects on the respectability of the extreme right actor

Finally, we look at how platforming extreme right views affects the perceived level of respectability of the actor who expresses these views. We display the results in Figure 3. The results show some differences by country. While we observe large and statistically significant negative net effects on perceived respectability in the UK on both platforms and both interview conditions, findings are more mixed in Australia. There is both an increase in respondents who see Cottrell as respectable and as unrespectable in the treatment conditions. We also model this answer situation using multinomial logistic regression because "Don't Knows" are more prevalent in the placebo condition (the weather report) and excluding them would bias our results. The results, which are displayed in Table E.4 in the Appendix, confirm a positive effect on perceived respectability vs "Don't Knows" and between perceived unrespectability vs "Don't Knows". The difference between these two options is relatively equal given that the level of net respectability is already slightly higher in the control groups (the weather report). These contrasting findings by country could be explained by the way the two actors are initially perceived in the placebo. The placebo groups in Figure 3 reveal that Robinson was considerably more well-known than Cottrell initially, and a higher number of individuals held negative views of him compared to positive ones. In contrast, Cottrell was an unknown figure. This suggests that giving a platform to unknown extreme right actors might lead to polarised opinions, while it might backfire on those who have already a relatively high level of notoriety.

Interestingly, we find some evidence from the Australian case that the platform negatively affects the level of respectability of the actor. We do not find any evidence for such a mechanism in the UK. As shown in column 2 of Table E.4 and in Figure 3, the level of respectability (unrespectability) towards Cottrell is lower (higher) among those who listen to the unchallenged interview on Sky News as opposed to those who listen to the unchallenged interview on the YouTube Channel. This means that the reputation of the Australian extreme right actor is more tarnished when the interview is on a traditional mainstream

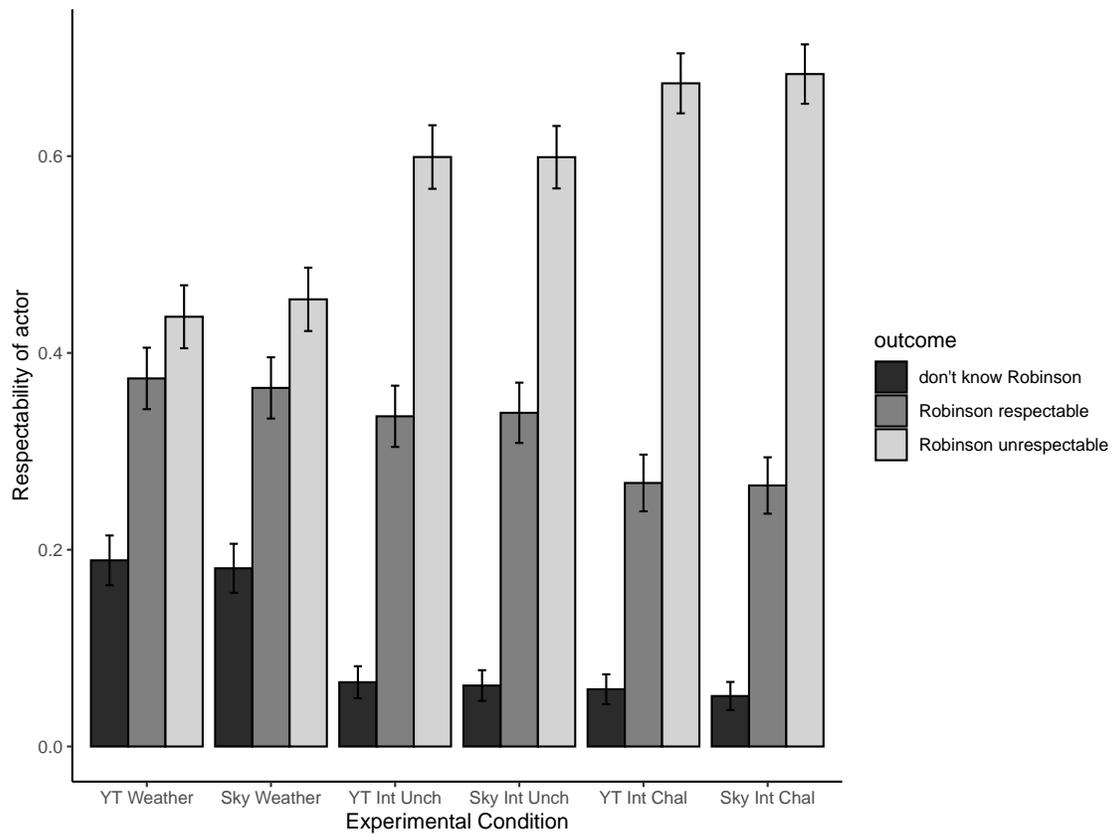
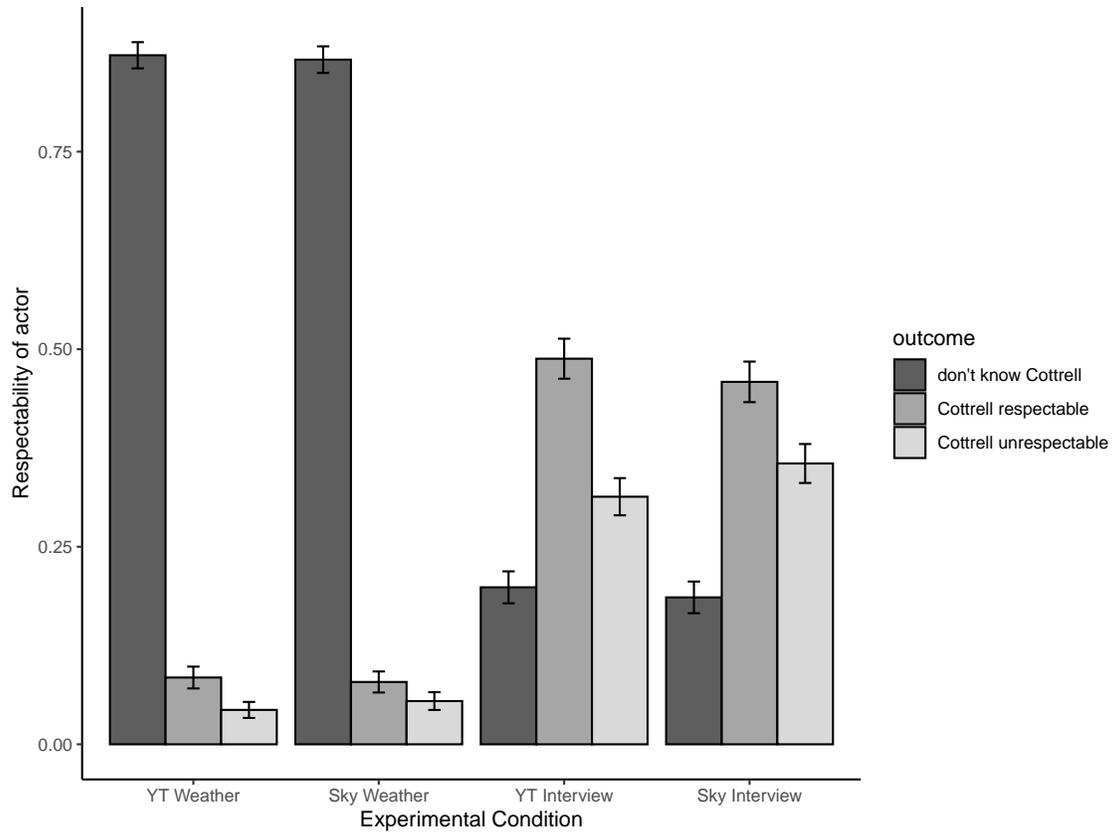


Figure 3: Level of respectability towards the extreme right actor in Australia (top) and the UK (bottom) across experimental conditions. 95% confidence intervals

platform. Yet, while this effect is in the same direction in the UK, it is not statistically significant. We can therefore conclude that there is mixed evidence on whether the type of platform affects the image of the actor.

Last but not least, Table E.4 and Figure 3 show that adopting a confrontational interview strategy negatively affects the image of the extreme right actor. This is consistent with our findings for extreme right attitudes and norms. British respondents who are assigned to the challenged interview are about 9%-points less inclined to find Robinson respectable compared to those who listen to the unchallenged interview, which corroborates our media strategy hypothesis. The negative effect of the interview on the respectability of the extreme right actor is larger if the extreme right actor is challenged by the journalist.

Manipulation, attrition and attention checks

We report a series of manipulation, attrition and attention checks in Appendix F. First, as expressed earlier, the manipulation checks were successful, which means that the cues were well understood by respondents. As Table F.2 shows, a large majority of participants were able to identify the type of content and platform they listened to.

Second, we made sure that our results are not affected by potential differential attrition across experimental conditions. Since respondents had the opportunity to answer "Don't Know" to any of the questions, we had to check that there was no differential attrition as a function of the experimental condition to which respondents were assigned to. As shown in Table F.3, we found no differential attrition for extreme right attitudes or descriptive norms, but we found some differences across conditions for the level of respectability of the actor. We therefore used multinomial logit models and included "Don't Knows" as a separate category for this dependent variable.

Third, our findings are robust to the exclusion of respondents who did not pass the pre-treatment attention check (see Tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 in the Appendix). There is one exception in the interaction between the unchallenged interview and the Sky News platform

concerning individuals' support for extreme right attitudes. This result goes in the same direction as in the main analysis but is significant at $p < .05$, contrary to the hypothesised direction of the interaction (see model 8 of Table F.4). Since it is only a small minority of respondents who fail the check (12.59% in Australia and 17.86% in the UK), we presented our main findings with all respondents.

Finally, we are confident in our null findings relating to the type of platform because Sky News was ranked as more mainstream and trustworthy than the YouTube Channel by respondents in both countries. Moreover, Sky News was perceived as mainstream and trustworthy as the two other popular channels in each respective country, ABC for Australia and the BBC for the UK.¹³ Two-paired t-tests (see Table F.8 in the Appendix) also confirm that Sky News was perceived as more mainstream and trustworthy than the YouTube Channel and the difference is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ in both countries. Additionally, we run the models where we only include respondents who ranked Sky News as a mainstream platform. The models, which are found in Table in the Appendix, shows consistent results with the main models, thereby suggesting that our findings hold for the majority of respondents who consider Sky News to be a mainstream platform.

Mechanisms

While we have established that the media platforming of extreme right activists influences individuals' support for extreme right statements and their perception of others' endorsement of these statements, we found that the type of platform (YouTube or Sky News) on which the interview was allegedly broadcast does not impact respondents' attitudes or beliefs. In line with our theory and hypotheses, the most credible explanation for these findings is that respondents update their views in the direction of the information that they receive (Coppock, 2023), even if that information is extreme and, at least partially, incorrect.

¹³Mean mainstream levels in Australia are 3.37 for Sky News vs 3.75 for ABC. In the UK, we have 4.00 for Sky News vs 4.35 for the BBC. Concerning source trustworthiness, mean levels in Australia are 3.15 for

	United Kingdom			
	ER statements are accurate		The actor is far right	
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>				
Unchallenged interview	0.25*** (0.07)	0.22** (0.07)	0.59*** (0.01)	0.59*** (0.01)
Challenged interview	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.19** (0.07)	0.60*** (0.01)	0.60*** (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>				
Sky News Platform	0.05 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	3.24*** (0.06)	2.06*** (0.22)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.13** (0.04)
Covariate Adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.01	0.14	0.32	0.34
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.14	0.31	0.34
Observations	5482	5482	5482	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, party-ID and Brexit vote.

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

Table 4: Perceived accuracy of ER statements and identity of actor

In Table 4 we provide evidence on potential mechanisms that might explain some of these findings. In line with an explanation based on updating, we find that British respondents are not only more likely to agree with extreme right statements in the unchallenged condition, but they are also more likely to believe that these statements are accurate after exposure. Moreover, once challenged by the interviewer, Table 4 shows that respondents are significantly less likely to rate these statements as accurate, and hence do not approve of them. This finding highlights the role that fact-checking can play in correcting extreme right statements, which is consistent with existing studies (Chan et al., 2017; Wood and Porter, 2019). While we cannot statistically identify the causal chain that connects beliefs in the factual accuracy of a statement and agreement with that statement, the evidence is at least consistent with such a mechanism.

There are possible alternative interpretations of our findings that we need to address.

Sky News vs for 3.78 for ABC. In the UK, we have 3.60 for Sky News vs 3.61 for the BBC.

First and foremost, the interviews might have failed to convey that the activists interviewed are extreme or far right activists, or perhaps this information was only conveyed in the challenged interview condition and not in the unchallenged interview condition. Such an explanation might appear plausible, given the relatively high levels of agreement (1/3 in the UK and just below 50% in Australia) with the actors' statements in the placebo conditions. We find very strong evidence against an interpretation that questions whether subjects were able to infer the true nature of the actor or his statements. Table 4 clearly shows that an overwhelming majority of subjects is able to correctly identify the interviewee as a far right activist. We find that respondents who listen to the interview are much more inclined to believe that Robinson is a far right political figure, as opposed to those who listen to the weather report. The effect amounts to almost 60%-points. The unchallenged interview alone makes his extreme right ideology apparent. In fact, as Table 4 shows, the challenged interview adds little to how respondents categorise the interviewee.

Next, we test whether subjects update their attitudes across the board, or if there is significant heterogeneity based on socially conservative pre-treatment attitudes. The latter would suggest that only those already pre-disposed to conform to extreme right statements would eventually do so. Explanations focused on backlash and polarisation would also suggest that socially liberal individuals should be less likely to agree with the statements made after exposure. However, in our pre-registered test for heterogeneous treatment effects by liberal-authoritarian attitudes, we find only weak evidence in favour of such a mechanism, and no evidence of backlash. Figure 4 displays the Conditional Average Treatment Effects of the (unchallenged) interview conditional on liberal-authoritarian attitudes (ranging from liberal 0 to 1 authoritarian) that we recorded based on agreement with multiple unrelated statements before the treatment. While the positive effect of the interview appears stronger among those with medium to high authoritarian attitudes, the interaction is not statistically different from zero and the effect is not negative among liberal respondents. In fact, what is clearly visible from these figures, is just how prevalent authoritarian social attitudes are in

both countries, although they are even more pronounced in Australia.

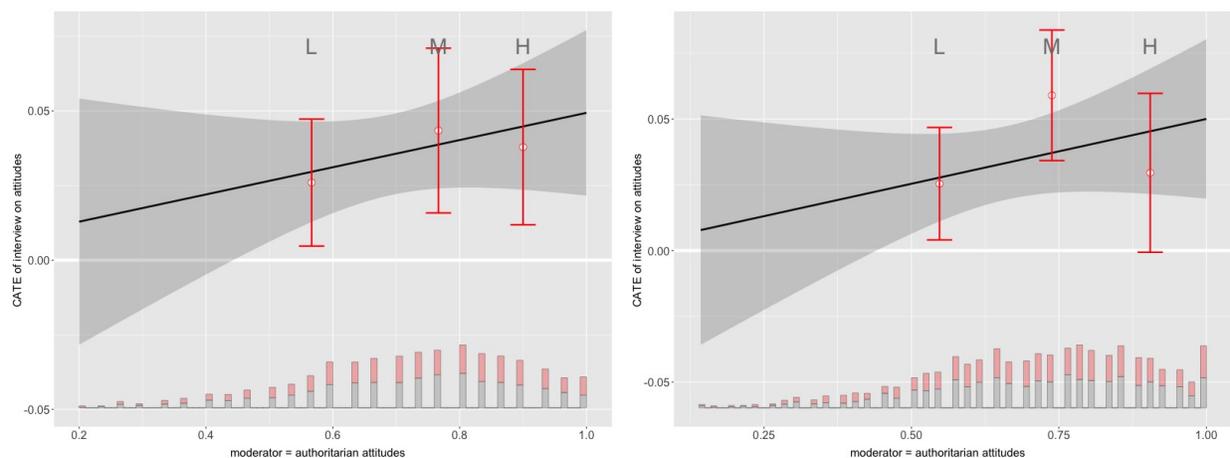


Figure 4: Conditional average treatment effects of unchallenged interview on extreme right attitudes conditional on authoritarian attitudes in Australia (left) and the UK (right). 95% confidence intervals

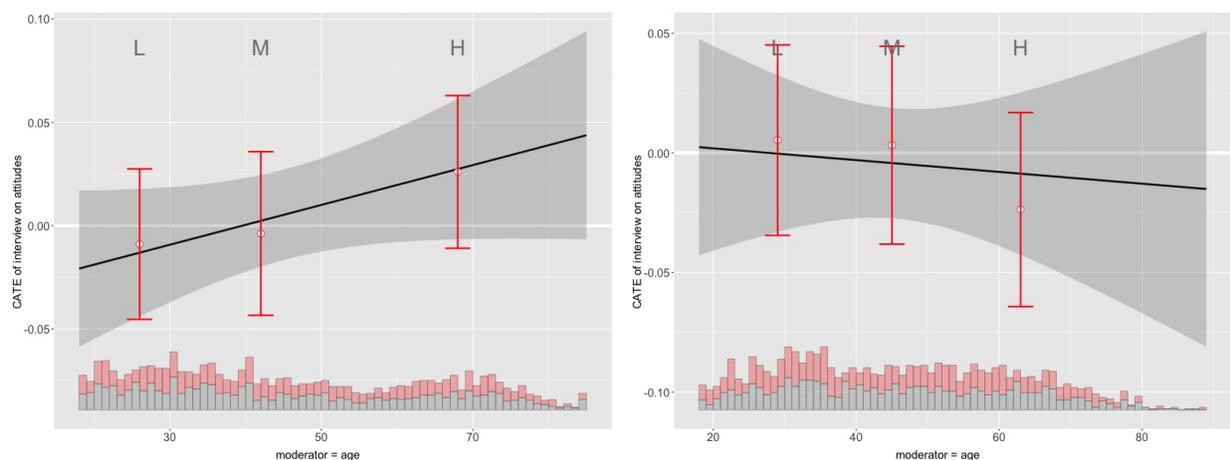


Figure 5: Conditional average treatment effects of unchallenged interview on extreme right norms conditional on age in Australia (left) and the UK (right). 95% confidence intervals

In Appendix Table F.8 we showed that respondents rate Sky News as significantly more mainstream and trustworthy than a YouTube Channel. In Figure 5 we display the Conditional Average Treatment Effects of the type of platform by age. It might be possible that older respondents are more likely to perceive platform effects than younger respondents who are more familiar with online media. While we find some evidence in favour of that in Australia, we find no evidence of such an explanation in the UK. Platform effects are zero

in the UK across all ages.

Conclusion

Does the platforming of extreme right actors contribute to the spread and normalisation of extreme right views, and if so, how? Using two large survey experiments based on real-life interviews with extreme right political activists in Australia and the UK, we consistently find that giving a platform, no matter the type or style, to an extreme right activist leads to a change in perceived descriptive norms. Our study also suggests that uncritical interviewing leads individuals to agree with the statements made by the actor. Our findings on belief accuracy is consistent with a mechanism suggesting that people become persuaded of the accuracy of these views, if they go unchallenged. However, the type of platform on which the extreme right actor diffuses his ideas does not appear to matter per se. Being exposed to an extreme right interview on a traditional mainstream TV channels or on the online platform YouTube has the same effect on attitudes and norms. Drawing on the UK experiment, we also show the relevance of a journalist's critical stance towards the actor and his statements. Individuals are more likely to agree with extreme right statements and think that others agree with them if the actor's extreme and false claims are not challenged by the journalist. Having a journalist challenge the actor's ideas counteracts the attitudinal effects that we observe in the unchallenged interview and has a large negative effect on how "accurate" people rate his statements. However, we find zero evidence that adverse interviewing makes people less likely to agree with extreme right statements, compared to the placebo group. This is an important finding, which speaks directly to the popular claim that (critical) exposure damages extreme right ideas. It seems to have a negative impact on the actor, as respondents exposed to the adverse interview rate him as "less credible". However, it does not appear to defeat extreme right ideas, only fight them to a draw. Moreover, while adverse interviewing attenuates the normalisation of extreme right views in society, these normalisation effects

do not entirely disappear, but appear to materialise at a lower rate. Platforming extreme right actors hence leads to a smaller change in descriptive norms, which cannot entirely be mitigated by adverse interviewing. Finally, we find that exposure is not costless for extreme right actors, at least not in all contexts. While their name recognition increases overall, the image of the extreme right activist is consistently tarnished in the British experiment, with negative ratings increasing more than positive ratings after exposure. This is not the case in the Australian experiment, where both positive and negative ratings increase in tandem.

This study contributes to the literature on the support for the far right by providing evidence for the attitudinal and normalisation effects of media exposure to extreme right actors and messages via interview formats. Individuals appear to update their attitudes in the ideological direction of the message, which is consistent with more general findings from survey experiments (Coppock, 2023). However, it is striking that updating in the direction of the information still occurs even when strong source cues related to extreme right content are present and perceived by respondents. Clearly, a large majority of participants were able to identify the interviewee as being part of the extreme right using only the statements made, without relying on the challenging questions and contextualisation provided by the interviewer. People are not only more likely to agree with extreme right statements after interview exposure, but are also more likely to believe that such statements are accurate. This goes against the backlash and polarisation hypotheses, which would predict that people's attitudes move against the extreme right after exposure or in opposite directions based on their ideological priors, leading to polarisation. This is not the case: exposure to extreme right actors moves people towards the extreme right, not against it. It also does not appear to polarise their views, at least not to a large extent. Where we do observe some polarisation is in the case of the actor's image, but we cannot predict this polarisation based on prior attitudes.

Our findings also suggest that the type of platform where the interview is broadcast does not influence people's views or their perceptions of how popular those views are in

society at large. While this might contradict some studies that emphasise the importance of source cues in making messages more effective (Druckman, 2001; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Miller and Krosnick, 2000), our results resonate with Peterson and Allamong (2022)’s recent experimental study, which finds that unfamiliar media sources (i.e. with no pre-existing reputation) influence opinion as much as familiar media sources.

Moreover, by conducting realistic and credible experiments in Australia and the UK, we complement studies of media (non-)exposure that primarily focus on the United States (Broockman and Kalla, 2022; Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan, 2009). Our experiments combine a high degree of internal validity with environmental and external validity by using real-life interviews and reaching similar conclusions in both Australia and the UK. At the expense of not being able to detect if these attitudinal and normalisation effects are durable, we can show that persuasion and normalisation effects are consistent in two countries with varying shares of conservative media. Interviews with extreme right actors shift people’s views to the extreme right in environments where people are exposed to two thirds of conservative media (like in Australia), or only one third (like in the UK) (MRC, 2021). Our findings are likely to generalise to a large set of extreme right issues, as we observe similar results in both interviews across topics related to immigration, crime, terrorism and Islam. They should also hold across most industrialised countries, where extreme right activists are an increasing presence in the media—whether it’s Alex Jones on InfoWars in the US or Eric Zemmour in Le Figaro in France. Additionally, as conservative media outlets and platform such as Fox News or GB News, along with talk radio or podcasts such as the Salem Radio Network or the Daily Wire, have gained popularity, more and more people are likely to be exposed to such interviews.

This study also makes important contributions to the emerging literature on the normalisation of the extreme right (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020; Bischof and Wagner, 2019; Valentim, 2021). While often assumed, but rarely tested, we have demonstrated that media platforming of extreme right actors contributes to the acceptance of extreme right attitudes

in society. We employed descriptive norms as an outcome variable, a rarely utilised approach in political science, to show that exposure to extreme right interviews in the media also prompts individuals to revise their perception of others' agreement with those statements. This finding is significant as others have shown that individuals rely on descriptive norms to shape their own behaviour (Valentim, 2023; Tankard and Paluck, 2017). If they give extreme right actors a platform to air their views, media channels contribute to normalising hatred against minority groups, thus undermining the values and norms of liberal democracy. Further research on normalisation of far right views should include the role of the media as a significant factor that can influence increased public expressions of support for the far right. Additionally, this study has focused on the extreme right, but further studies could investigate the effects of media platforming of views articulated by extreme left-wing actors. Based on our results, we have no reason to believe that attitudinal and normative updating would not happen in the same way.

Finally, our findings align with recent studies that demonstrate how negative media portrayal of Muslims increase negative sentiment towards them and fuels support for anti-Muslim policies (Lajevardi, 2021). Moreover, we provide evidence that increased media exposure to derogatory speech drives anti-outgroup attitudes and that these negative effects are comparable for different perceived outgroups, such as Black Africans in Australia and Muslims and refugees in the UK. This is particularly concerning given the increased media coverage of Muslims (Lajevardi, 2021) and refugee stories over time (Lo and Lang, 2023).

Our study has significant implications for politicians, policymakers and journalists. First, the finding that platforming unchallenged extreme right content radicalises individuals and normalises extreme views in society is sobering, especially for those who expect that extreme right views lose credibility when broadcast. Second, persuasion and normalisation effects can be significantly alleviated if journalists engage with extreme right actors critically and dare to challenge them robustly. Journalists who fact-check incorrect claims nullify the effectiveness of the conveyed message on attitudes and significantly mitigate, although not

nullify, the process of normalising these views in society at large. However, importantly, they do not reverse the process but can, at best, hope to balance the extreme right activist’s influence. As a result, our study suggests that if TV channels decide to platform extreme right activists, journalists who adopt a critical, challenging tone and question the accuracy of false statements can mitigate attitudinal and, to a lesser extent, normative effects.

Third, in some contexts, critical engagement appears to negatively affect the actor’s image. This means that exposure does not come without consequences for the extreme right activist. Finally, reach matters. Media platforms, whether traditional mainstream TV channels or alternative internet platforms, can serve as powerful spaces for spreading and normalising extreme right content. The power of traditional mainstream media sources, however, appears to lie more in their ability to capture a larger audience than in any inherent difference in the effectiveness of their messages once they have gained an audience. Therefore media de-platforming still appears as an effective tool to minimise the reach of extreme-right actors and hate speech, as shown by recent social media studies (Rauchfleisch and Kaiser, 2021; Buntain et al., 2023). In times of growing media exposure of extremist actors and content, journalists who question the accuracy of extreme right beliefs, and media companies that are willing to enforce standards and de-platform individuals who break them, may be able to counter the empirical pattern that this study documents.

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A Forms and questionnaires

A.1 Information form

Figure A.1: Information Form-Australia and the UK

This study on media coverage is run by *[the authors' names]*.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research project which examines the role of media coverage in the formation of political attitudes. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

If you choose to participate in the study you will be asked to listen to a recent audio media file and then complete an online survey on your political attitudes and beliefs. Listening to the audio, and completing the survey, will take around five minutes.

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to and choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway.

Your data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). Any data you provide will remain anonymous and confidential, will not be shared with any third parties, and will be retained for ten years.

You are free to withdraw at any point of the study, without having to give a reason. Withdrawing from the study will not affect you in any way. However, before data collected become anonymous upon completion of the questionnaire, it will not be possible to locate and delete your data once you have completed the questionnaire. If you choose to withdraw from the study **before completion** your information will not be retained

This study is being funded by the *[funders of our study]*. The results of the study will be summarised in academic journal articles. You can contact us for a copy of any publications.

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator using the following contact details: *[the contact details of the authors]*.

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact *[the contact details of our institution's ethics committee]*.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research. Please answer the following question to proceed.

I have read and understood the study information, or it has been read to me. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study any time, without having to give a reason. I understand that the information will be used for research publication and that the information will be anonymised. I give permission for the anonymised information I provide to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used for future research.

- Yes
- No

A.2 Consent form

Figure A.2: Consent Form-Australia and the UK

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Media coverage and political attitudes

Ethics Committee Ref:

Before starting the survey, please read the following bullet points carefully, and if you agree, please check the box next to each item. If you have any questions regarding any item, please do not hesitate to send an email to *[the authors' contact details]*. Upon confirming your willingness to participate in this study you may enter your email address to receive a copy of this information.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialing each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study

Please tick or initial

- I confirm that I have read the previous paragraphs and have had the opportunity to consider the information, and contact the researcher with any questions.
- I understand that I will be able to withdraw my participation, and any associated data, from this study by aborting the survey at any time before I click the 'submit' button, or by sending an email to CONTACT@SURVATION.COM). No reasons need to be given for withdrawing your data from the study.
- I understand that non-participation in this study will not disadvantage me in any way.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for this study. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and that it will not be possible to identify me or any other individuals in any publications.
- I agree to participate

A.3 Debrief forms

Figure A.3: Debrief Form-Australia

Thank you for your participation in our study! Your participation is greatly appreciated.

The general aim of this study is to test whether mainstream media platforms can help to legitimise radical views. Existing research on the media's role in affecting audiences' political beliefs is inconclusive; while some studies reveal that media stigmatisation of radical political actors can undermine support, other studies suggest that media coverage increases the electoral appeal of radical actors.

The experiment used a recent audio recording from Sky News interviewing Blair Cottrell, the leader of the United Patriots Front, to test if exposing subjects to the audio legitimizes the activist's views. The first experimental arm varied whether participants were exposed to the audio of the interview or to a weather report, and the second arm varied whether we announced (or not) the name of the network which broadcast the interview/forecast. We do not know which group you were allocated to. You were then asked to fill in questions on your views on immigration and placement of social groups in society.

We expect to find a positive effect of the audio on support for radical views, which should be magnified if the network is revealed. The experiment will contribute to understanding the media's role in legitimizing radical views.

The interview contains incorrect information about immigration. Blair Cottrell expresses a preference for race-based immigration and inaccurately claims that the South African government is involved in killing white South African farmers. There is no objective evidence which would support such a claim. If you feel concerned about having viewed this video, you may contact the [*contact details of our institution's ethics committee*].

If you have further questions regarding this study, its purpose or procedures, or if you have a research-related problem, please feel free to contact the researchers, [*the contact details of the authors*].

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report of this study (or a summary of the findings) when it is completed, please feel free to contact us.

Figure A.4: Debrief Form-UK

Thank you for your participation in our study! Your participation is greatly appreciated.

The general aim of this study is to test whether mainstream media platforms can help to legitimise radical views and whether the tone of coverage of the interviewer influences the support for such views. Existing research on the media's role in affecting audiences' political beliefs is inconclusive; while some studies reveal that media stigmatisation of radical political actors can undermine support, other studies suggest that media coverage increases the electoral appeal of radical actors.

The experiment used a recent audio recording from Sky News interviewing Tommy Robinson, the former leader of the English Defence League, to test if exposing participants to the audio legitimises the activist's views. The first experimental arm varied whether participants were exposed to the audio of the interview where Robinson is challenged by the journalist, to the interview where he is not challenged by the journalist or to a weather report, and the second arm varied whether the name of the broadcast/interview is the Youtube Channel or Sky News. We do not know which group you were allocated to. You were then asked to fill in questions on your views on Islamophobia, migration control and terrorism.

We expect to find a positive effect of the audio on support for radical right views as opposed to the weather report but that the effect will be attenuated if Robinson is challenged by the journalist. We also expect to find that these effects would be magnified if the name of the broadcast/interview is Sky News. The experiment will contribute to understanding the media's role in legitimising radical views.

Participants were not shown the entire interview with Tommy Robinson, but specific segments that were relevant to the study. The original full length version of the interview contained interruptions by the Sky News interviewer, who challenged Robinson on some of the questionable and factually incorrect statements that were made in various segments.

The interview contains incorrect information about immigration. Tommy Robinson expresses a preference for a halt to Mosque-building and inaccurately claims that a travel ban would prevent terrorist attacks or the rape of women and girls. He also implies that most Muslim refugees are terrorists. There is no objective evidence which would support such claims. If you feel concerned about having viewed this audio recording, you may contact the *[the contact details of our ethics committee's institution]*.

If you have further questions regarding this study, its purpose or procedures, or if you have a research-related problem, please feel free to contact the researchers, *[the authors' contact details]*.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report of this study (or a summary of the findings) when it is completed, please feel free to contact us.

A.4 Questionnaires

Figure A.5: Questionnaire-Australia

Questions in grey italic are only asked in the first wave. Questions in black italic have been added in the second wave.

Pre-treatment questions: The following suggestion was made: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following items? (5 scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional Australian values.

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.

For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence.

Schools should teach children to obey authority.

The law should always be obeyed, even when a particular law is felt to be wrong.

Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards.

Have you heard of Blair Cottrell? (Have heard of, Have not heard of, Not sure)

For this question only, select "Strongly Disagree" on the following scale (From Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

To what extent do you consider these news channels to be mainstream? (5-scale from Very Mainstream to Not Mainstream at all): Sky News, ABC Channel, Channel 7, Youtube Channels.

To what extent do you consider these news channels to be trustworthy? (5 scale from Very Trustworthy to Not Trustworthy at all) : Sky News, ABC Channel, Channel 7, Youtube Channels.

Treatment: 1st wave: 'You are going to listen to Blair Cottrell being interviewed on Sky News/ my Youtube Channel' or 'You're going to listen to a weather report on Sky News/ my Youtube Channel'.

2nd wave: 'This is my Youtube Channel/Sky News, now on to an interview on current affairs' or 'This is my Youtube Channel/Sky News, now on to the latest weather forecast' or 'This is Sky News, now on to the latest weather forecast'.

Post-treatment questions:

Have you heard of the Lads society? Yes, No, DK

If yes, would you say that the Lads Society is a mainstream political organisation? Yes, No, DK

How many members do you think that the Lads Society has in Australia? Number from 0-1 million

How respectable would you say Blair Cottrell is? (5-point scale from Respectable to Not Respectable).

What percentage of Australians do you think agree with the following (sliding scale from 0 to 100)

(a) A country should only accept groups of people that are not too culturally dissimilar to the existing population.

(b) A country should only tolerate skilled migrants.

(c) Australia should not allow people from Africa to come to the country.

(d) African gangs are responsible for the rise of criminality in Australia.

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is totally disagree and 10 is totally agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(a) A country should only accept groups of people that are not too culturally dissimilar to the existing population.

(b) A country should only tolerate skilled migrants.

(c) Australia should not allow people from Africa to come to the country.

(d) African gangs are responsible for the rise of criminality in Australia.

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is totally disagree and 10 is totally agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement (0-10 scale):

The values of the majority of the Australian population are usually not represented in the mainstream media.

What was the interview about?

Weather report

Sports programme

Interview with a political activist

Interview with a musician

Where was the interview broadcast? Channel 7, a Youtube Channel, ABC Channel, Sky News.

Figure A.6: Questionnaire-UK

Pre-treatment questions: 1. The following suggestion was made: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following items? (7 scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values.

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.

For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence.

Schools should teach children to obey authority.

The law should always be obeyed, even when a particular law is felt to be wrong.

Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards.

2. Have you heard of Tommy Robinson? (Have heard of, Have not heard of, Not sure)

3. For this question only, select "Strongly Disagree" on the following scale (From Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

4. To what extent do you consider these news channels to be mainstream? (5 scale from Very Mainstream to Not Mainstream at all)

Sky News

BBC

ITV

Youtube Channels

5. To what extent do you consider these news channels to be trustworthy? (5 scale from Very Trustworthy to Not Trustworthy at all)

Sky News

BBC

ITV

Youtube Channels

Treatment: 'This is my Youtube Channel, now on to an interview on current affairs' or 'This is Sky News, now on to an interview on current affairs' before being asked to listen to the audio or 'This is my Youtube Channel, now on to the latest weather forecast' or 'This is Sky News, now on to the latest weather forecast'.

Post-treatment questions:

6. How respectable would you say Tommy Robinson is? (5-point scale from Respectable to Not Respectable).

7. What percentage of British do you think agree with the following (sliding scale from 0 to 100) ?

(a) The United Kingdom should not continue building mosques.

(b) The United Kingdom should implement a travel ban that would prevent refugees from Muslim-majority countries from entering the country.

(c) A travel ban would have prevented terrorist attacks in Europe.

(d) A travel ban would have prevented women and girls from being raped.

(e) Most Muslim refugees are terrorists.

8. How accurate do you think the following statements are? (10-point scale from Fully Inaccurate to Fully Accurate)

(a) Most Muslim refugees are terrorists.

(b) Almost 90% of the rapes in Sweden have been from immigrants.

9. Do you think we should broadcast this type of interview?

10. What was the interview about?

Weather report

Sports programme

Interview with a far-right political activist

Interview with a political activist

Interview with a musician

B Ethics

In this section we discuss the ethical implications of our study in reference to the APSA’s Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research (APSA, 2020). In this study, we expose participants to extreme right actors and their views, preceded by informed consent and followed by extensive debriefing. The information and consent sheets given to Australian and British participants are displayed in documents A.1 and A.2, and the debriefing documents are displayed in documents A.3 and A.4. Throughout the research process, which lasted four years, we have engaged thoroughly with potential ethical questions that could arise from our study. Ethical questions were discussed openly and publicly in a workshop, where we presented the design of our study and at a conference, where we presented the Pre-Analysis Plan of the Australia study. We have made changes to the design of the study in response to the comments that we received. Some of the statements made by the extreme right actors in the segments that we expose participants to are false or misleading. The study therefore raises questions of *deception* and *impact*, i.e. the question to what extent attitudinal changes are likely to persist beyond the study environment. We address these challenges in turn.

B.1 Deception

As the APSA (2020)[7]’s guidance states "Political science researchers should carefully consider any use of deception and the ways in which deception can conflict with participant autonomy." Our study does not raise any issues relating to identity deception, activity deception, and motivation deception. It chiefly raises questions about how we deal with exposing participants to statements made by extreme right actors in the unchallenged interview condition that are false or misleading. In line with APSA’s guidance to respect subjects’ autonomy when deception is used, we decided to provide a thorough debriefing of all study participants in the same survey, directly after outcome collection is complete. In this debriefing, we provide the full context of the study and correct any misleading or factually incorrect statement made during the interview segment. This choice comes with one important trade-off. It prevents us from estimating the effects of exposure to the interviews on long-term outcomes and of assessing how long a change in attitudes might last. While this question is interesting from a theoretical point of view, we believe that the ethical cost we might induce by not being able to debrief those participants who would not answer a second survey wave, might be too high.

B.2 Impact

Related to our use of deception is the issue whether the effects on attitudes and norms that observe in the survey environment might spill over into the real-world. We have good reasons to believe that the extensive debriefing administered to participants in both experiments immediately cancelled out the effects of exposure to the unchallenged interview on attitudes: In the British study we show that the challenged interview condition does not affect agreement with the statements made by the extreme right actor. We also show that subjects are more likely to rate the statements made by the interviewee as factually incorrect when the interviewer provides context and corrects misleading or false claims. We have no reason to believe that providing a similar correction after outcome collection would not achieve a similar result. While we still observe some effect on norms within the survey environment, even after correction, we expect that these effects, at worst, do not last longer than a couple of weeks. We further believe that the risk that participating in the study induces risky behaviour in the real world is minor.

We confirm that our study is in full compliance with the APSA’s Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research (APSA, 2020).

C Deviations from the pre-analysis plan

The final analyses deviate in a few instances from the pre-registration, which can be accessed on the OSF ([click here for the Australian PAP](#) and [here for the British PAP](#)). Our pre-registration is divided into two PAPs, each corresponding to one study: the Australian study (which consists of two waves) and the British study. We address any deviations from the PAP in turn. We conducted two waves of the Australian study to increase the N in order to rule out any interaction effects between the platform and exposure to the interview, and to conduct manipulation checks.

C.1 Hypotheses

For the sake of parsimony, we combine hypotheses into sub-hypotheses and slightly revise the labels by which we refer to them to better capture the concepts that we intend to measure. The ‘platforming’ hypothesis was renamed into ‘platform type’ hypothesis, and the ‘tone of coverage’ hypothesis was relabelled as the ‘media strategy hypothesis’. Despite these changes in labels, the empirical expectations remain the same as pre-registered in the PAPs. In the Australian PAP, we also pre-registered the ‘backlash hypothesis’ and the ‘polarisation hypothesis’ as alternative hypotheses to the ‘persuasion and normalisation’

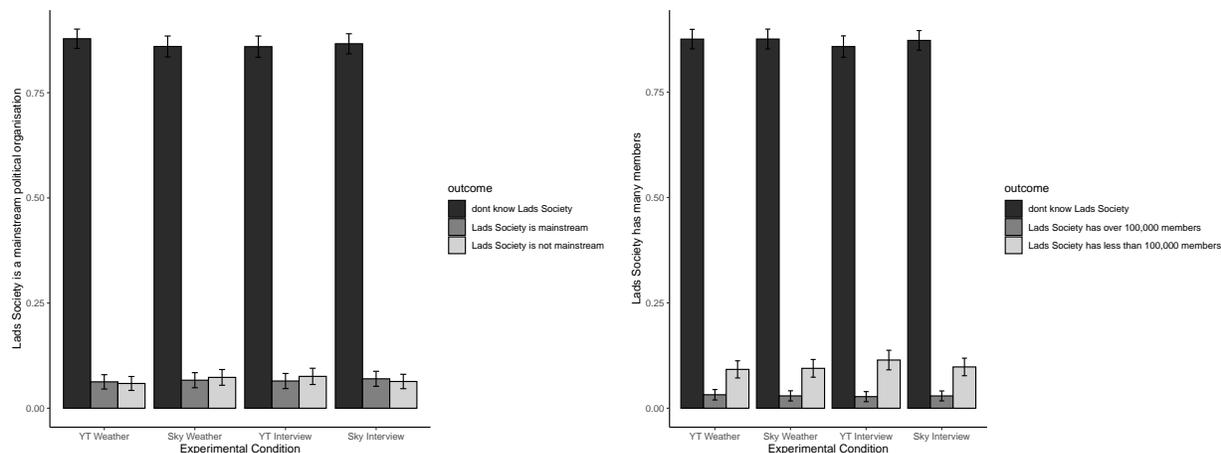


Figure C.1: Perceptions of Cottrell’s organisation, the Lads Society, in Australia across experimental conditions. 95% confidence intervals (question included in wave 1 only).

hypothesis". While we discuss these alternative hypotheses in the text, we do not list them separately. As we discuss in the paper, we do not find any evidence consistent with these alternative hypotheses Australia or the UK.

C.2 Variables

We report all pre-registered outcome variables in the main body of the paper, except for two outcomes that were only included in the first wave of the Australian experiment. They both relate to Blair Cottrell’s organisation, the "Lads Society". As shown in figure C.1, more than 80% of respondents had never heard of the Lads Society across all conditions, which makes the interpretation of the null results that we report below, difficult.

Moreover, the descriptive norms scale was recoded on a scale of 0 to 1 to match the outcome variable on extreme right attitudes, deviating from the pre-analysis plan’s suggestion of a scale of 0 to 100. Moreover, the respectability outcome was recoded into a categorical variable due to differential attrition related to the treatment. Respondents were less likely to answer "Don’t Know" in the interview conditions, which led to the use of multinomial logit models instead of the originally specified linear regressions in the pre-analysis plan to test the interview exposure effect on the respectability of the actor. This adaptation was made to avoid bias in the outcome variable due to differential attrition.

C.3 Exploratory analyses

Finally, as an attempt to understand why individuals update their opinion and the perception of social norms, we have further explored the underlying mechanisms. The finding that people in the critical interview would find these extreme right statements less accurate is not

pre-registered.

C.4 Interaction effects

We estimate the interaction effects using the `interflex` package by Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2019) to account for potential non-linearity in the functional form.

D Transcripts of the audio recordings

D.1 The Australian Experiment - Wave 1

Interview

Actor: You are listening to Blair Cottrell being interviewed on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Journalist: Now my next guest has been described by his supporters as an idealist, a patriot, someone who is standing for the culture of the national identity of what it used to be. Others will call him a thug, Public Enemy number one, labelling him a Neo-Nazi. Blair Cottrell welcome to the show. When it comes to immigration there is a lot of talk about reducing immigration in Australia. We are commenting on the show recently that immigration has come down by 20,000 and some people are saying that this is going a lot further. Where do you see immigration in Australia in terms of its mix and its numerical areas and why do people come to Australia, whether it's urban or regional areas.

Cottrell: Look. My standpoint on immigration is really quite simple and quite practical. A) Skilled migrants. Immigrants who can prove they got some form of qualification, prove their work history etc. B) Immigrants who are not too culturally dissimilar from us. And even if you want to draw the line on A and say just skilled workers, working migrants.

Journalist: Australia takes a number of immigrants from African continent. We see a lot of issues in Melbourne itself around African gangs. Do you have a position on whether or not we should be so allowing more Africans from other countries coming to Australia or should it just be White South African farmers?

Cottrell: Well, if I let principle B of my standpoint on immigration. These people are not culturally similar to us. I do not think White South African farmers are going to be ransacking homes, carjacking, attacking police, chopping people off with machetes on the street. This happened on the northern suburbs of Melbourne. I think it was earlier this year or maybe later last year.

Journalist: So, you've got a pretty big platform. You've been involved in a range of organisations in the past, you know the United Patriots front and number of others. Are you politically motivated in wanting to form your own party? Now that you've looked at 2016, you didn't get to the point to make that happen. Where are you now in terms of politics?

Cottrell: Right now, we are in the process of creating community-based organisations called Lads Society.

Journalist: What is it called?

Cottrell: Lads Society. We have two community-based organisations. One in Melbourne. One in Sydney. The purpose of these societies is to draw in disenfranchised young Aussies. People who are, basically people who are able to recognise the hostile propaganda and institutions. People who are sick of being called racists for pointing out things the way they are.

Journalist: Well, Blair Cottrell, good luck. I hope it all goes well for you. Thank you so much

for joining us. Safe travels and we see if you come to the forefront of politics in the future. Thanks very much.

Cottrell: Cheers.

Actor: Thank you for listening to the interview on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Weather report

Actor: You are going to listen to a weather report on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Journalist 1: A major storms system has brought valuable rain to drought-affected parts of Australia's East. It has also caused flash flooding on major roads. A cleanup is now underway in many areas as the heavy rain moves on to the North South Wales Mid North Coast.

Journalist 2: "Yes- Freedom". It's hard not to smile seeing the happiness on this farmer's face. Heavy rains drenching drought tricky parts of the country's East also helping to dampen fire zones. The downfalls being celebrated in our regional centres but it's created some chaos in the cities. In Southeast Queensland severed storms triggered widespread flash flooding. 330mm of rain has been recorded at loading creek on the Gold Coast where the SES has responded to more than 100 calls for assistance. The deluge's so great it closed not only the Pacific Motorway for 6 hours but also theme parks, WhiteWater World and shops for the day as water levels rose. Zookeepers using brooms to try to keep alligators in their enclosures and waiting through the water to rescue koalas. All the 100mm of rain has been recorded at Bundoora in the northern Tablelands and for the first time in 5 years, water flew through a creek in a drought-stricken regional town. While the rain is being celebrated it's presenting some problems after the big dry.

A police interviewee: What we're seeing is that water moving over land and pulling and creating a few challenges for people in terms of rising water and people having to sandbag their homes.

Journalist 2: More thunderstorms and showers are forecast across Australia's East this weekend. Samantha Dorsen.

Actor: Thank you for listening to (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

D.2 The Australian Experiment - Wave 2

Interview

Actor: This is (Sky News/my Youtube Channel). Now onto an interview on Current Affairs.

Journalist: Now my next guest has been described by his supporters as an idealist, a patriot, someone who is standing for the culture of the national identity of what it used to be. Others will call him a thug, Public Enemy number one, labelling him a Neo-Nazi. Blair Cottrell welcome to the show. When it comes to immigration there is a lot of talk about reducing immigration in Australia. We are commenting on the show recently that immigration has come down by 20,000 and some people are saying that this is going a lot further. Where do you see immigration in Australia in terms of its mix and its numerical areas and why do people come to Australia, whether it's urban or regional areas.

Cottrell: Look. My standpoint on immigration is really quite simple and quite practical. A) Skilled migrants. Immigrants who can prove they got some form of qualification, prove their work history etc. B) Immigrants who are not too culturally dissimilar from us. And even if you want to draw the line on A and say just skilled workers, working migrants.

Journalist: Australia takes a number of immigrants from the African continent. We see a lot of issues in Melbourne itself around African gangs. Do you have a position on whether or not we should be so allowing more Africans from other countries coming to Australia or should it just be White South African farmers?

Cottrell: Well, if I let principle B of my standpoint on immigration. These people are not

culturally similar to us. I do not think White South African farmers are going to be ransacking homes, carjacking, attacking police, chopping people off with machetes on the street. This happened on the northern suburbs of Melbourne. I think it was earlier this year or maybe later last year.

Journalist: Well, Blair Cottrell, good luck. I hope it all goes well for you. Thank you so much for joining us. Safe travels and we see if you come to the forefront of politics in the future. Thanks very much.

Cottrell: Cheers.

Actor: This was an interview on current affairs on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Weather report

Actor: This is (Sky News/my Youtube Channel). Now onto the latest weather forecast.

Journalist: Perth is going to scorch tomorrow. We have maximum forecast of 38 degrees. It's going to be hot and dry. We will also have a gusty sea breeze coming through later in the day. So the Friday we'll just be elevated through south-west WA this weekend. In Queensland, it's looking stormy for the Northern half drying out in the south and also heating up as sunny top of 36 degrees is on the cards for Brisbane. We have sunshine in Sydney this Saturday, a lovely top of 31 degrees for the city. Most of New South Wales will be dry across Saturday. In Victoria, we have a few showers about the South. Some low cloud hanging here so Melbourne is looking at cool conditions through the weekend. And a second cold front is making its way across Tasmania this Saturday. That's going to bring the heaviest rain to the west of the state. In Adelaide, temperatures below average here, 25 degrees and partly cloudy afternoon and no rain around and we could use that rain in the South West of WA which temperatures are just soaring. We are seeing some heavy rain in northern parts of the country with the monsoon gradually making its way across to the Kimberley region in Western Australia.

Actor: This was the weather forecast on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

D.3 The British Experiment

The Unchallenged Interview

Actor: This is (Sky News/my Youtube Channel) and you're going to listen to an interview with Tommy Robinson. Tommy Robinson is the co-founder and leader of the English Defence League, and later served as a political advisor to former UKIP leader, Gerard Batten. Tommy Robinson has been described by his supporters as an idealist, a patriot, a defender of free speech. Others call him a Neo-Nazi, a thug who is inciting hate speech and violence. Now on to the interview on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Journalist: Ok, we are going to call you Tommy Robinson like this.

Robinson: Fine.

Journalist: You don't want to continue the building of mosques. You're correct?

Robinson: Ugh I temporarily on the whole. We have a huge problem here where the majority of mosques are funded by Saudi Arabia, Iran or Qatar. And the rituals are in similar sense. We don't know what's been preached in them, what's been taught in them. Every time we see an undercover investigation, every single time, we see hatred, we see anti-democratic views, anti-semitic views.

Journalist: Do you want to bring in a travel ban, like a Trump-style travel ban?

Robinson: I believe we should have a proper border control, yes. I believe we should have real borders where people are born into our country on merit.

Journalist: Why banning people coming from Southern Muslim countries?

Robinson: Well, what Donald Trump actually done was he banned people coming from failed states. If Europe would have a Donald Trump-style travel ban, we wouldn't have 248 less people

who had been murdered and butchered by refugees in the last two years. The Palmers Green bombing, he was a refugee. If we would have had a Donald Trump-style ban, he would not be here. If we would have had a Donald Trump-style ban, the refugee who drove a lorry over people in Berlin. Moroccan refugees, in fact, if you just want to look at refugee rapes, there were 5 refugees who raped a girl. If you look at the crime statistics, then almost over 90% of the rapes in Sweden have been from immigrants.

Journalist: Thank you very much for coming in.

Robinson: Thank you.

Actor: This was an interview with Tommy Robinson on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

The Challenged Interview

Actor: This is (Sky News/my Youtube Channel) and you're going to listen to an interview with Tommy Robinson. He is the co-founder and leader of the English Defence League, and later served as a political advisor to former UKIP leader, Gerard Batten. Tommy Robinson has been described as a Neo-Nazi, a thug who is inciting hate speech and violence. He is known for not always getting his facts right. Now on to the interview on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Journalist: Ok we are going to call you Tommy Robinson like this.

Robinson:: Fine.

Journalist: You don't want to continue the building of mosques. You're correct?

Robinson: Ugh I temporarily on the whole.

Journalist: Isn't that a restriction on religion? Isn't that a restriction on people's freedom to worship?

Robinson: Not if we're trying to solve our problem. We have a huge problem here where the majority of our mosques are funded by Saudi Arabia, Iran or Qatar. And the rituals are in a similar sense. We don't know what's been preached in them, what's been taught in them. Every time we see an undercover investigation, every single time, we see hatred, we see anti-democratic views, anti-semitic views.

Journalist: Well, those might be because they are targeted where someone has warned people about that kind of thing. We know there is a small portion of that.

Robinson: So I temporarily didn't want to, if I temporarily want to halt the building of mosques in the UK, does that make me ...?

Journalist: Do you want to bring in a travel ban, like a Trump-style travel ban?

Robinson: I believe we should have a proper border control, yes. I believe we should have real borders where people are born into our country on merit.

Journalist: Why banning people coming from Southern Muslim countries?

Robinson: Well, what Donald Trump actually done was he banned people coming from failed states. So the country he wants to ban ...

Journalist: Is that fair?

Robinson: Yes, it is fair, completely fair. In fact, If Europe would have a Donald Trump-style travel ban, we wouldn't have 248 less people who had been murdered and butchered by refugees in the last two years.

Journalist: Ugh.

Robinson: The Palmers Green bombing, he was a refugee. If we would have had a Donald Trump-style ban, he would not be here.

Journalist: The Pearsons Green.

Robinson: If we would have had a Donald Trump-style ban, the refugee who drove a lorry over people in Berlin. There's there's. Moroccan refugees in fact if you just want to look at refugee

rapes, there were 5 refugees who raped a girl in Calais.

Journalist: Look, there's rapes throughout society. There's, there's. You know. If you look at the crime statistics, there is awful lots of rapes, there is a awful lots of murders. And I'm sure that you can pick that some have been done by refugees.

Robinson: If you look at the crime statistics, then almost over 90% of the rapes in Sweden have been from immigrants.

Journalist: hmm, Where is your source for that?

Robinson: Where's my source for that?

Journalist: Where's your source that 90% of rapes are made by immigrants?

Robinson: Actually, a 100% in some cities.

Journalist: But where is your source? The problem is you quote these statistics.

Journalist: Thank you very much for coming in.

Robinson: Thank you.

Actor: This was an interview with Tommy Robinson on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

Weather report

Actor: This is (Sky News/my Youtube Channel). Now onto the latest weather forecast.

Journalist: The sun is going to shine. A lovely day for most of England and Wales today. It's tricky as whether how it will end up. It is brushing much of West Wales and Cambria, parts of Lancashire even Cornwall in the outward cities. But it does look like we tend just migrate a little bit further West at times, giving much more sunshine across the southwest throughout the day and across the Cardigan Bay and probably South Wales, you'll enjoy some sunshine as well. But it has turned pretty grey full parts of West Wales this morning, also Cumbria. But the rest of England and Wales, lovely. I find it starts a little bit of mistiness and lots of beautiful blue skies today, just a light breeze. And temperatures up to probably 19 Celsius, maybe 20 in East Anglia and South Eastleigh, which is 68 Fahrenheit. And light winds, it will feel really spring, lovely day. Now obviously no everywhere we see the sunshine. There will be a little bit across the North of Scotland but otherwise for most of the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland, we got this meandering thunder system bringing some damp weather initially, then some more persistent rain through the course of the afternoon and evening without streaming its way North-Eastwards into the Central Belt of Scotland later today. Even some snow as well for higher ground. And that thunder system, although pretty intense for a while, it does weaken as it runs its way southeast across England and Wales tonight. That means there will be a complete change in fortune tomorrow. Northern and Western areas where we had the cloud would be much sunnier tomorrow. The South and East will see the cloud and temperatures near 16.

Actor: This was the weather forecast on (Sky News/my Youtube Channel).

E Other models

E.1 With covariate coefficients

E.2 Multinomial logit regression

E.3 Models for each item

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)			-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)
Male		0.04*** (0.01)		0.04*** (0.01)		0.03*** (0.01)		0.03*** (0.01)
Age		0.00*** (0.00)		0.00*** (0.00)		-0.00*** (0.00)		-0.00*** (0.00)
Authoritarian Scale		0.64*** (0.02)		0.64*** (0.02)		0.36*** (0.02)		0.36*** (0.02)
Bachelor Degree Level		-0.00 (0.01)		-0.00 (0.01)				
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Postgraduate Degree Level/ Level 2</i>								
Bachelor Degree Level / No Qualifications / Level 1		-0.00 (0.01)		-0.00 (0.01)		0.04*** (0.01)		0.04*** (0.01)
Certificate Level / Level 3		0.01 (0.01)		0.01 (0.01)		-0.02 (0.01)		-0.02 (0.01)
Graduate Diploma / Level 4+		-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.02)		-0.03*** (0.01)		-0.03*** (0.01)
Postgraduate Degree Level		0.02 (0.01)		0.02 (0.01)				
School Qualification		-0.01 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)				
Other		0.00 (0.02)		0.00 (0.02)				
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Liberal Party and National/ Conservative</i>								
Labor / Labour		-0.08*** (0.01)		-0.08*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)
One Nation (Katters Aus) / Brexit Party		0.16*** (0.02)		0.16*** (0.02)		0.10*** (0.03)		0.10*** (0.03)
Greens / Green		-0.10*** (0.01)		-0.10*** (0.01)		-0.06** (0.02)		-0.06** (0.02)
Others/Liberal Democrats		-0.07*** (0.01)		-0.07*** (0.01)		-0.03* (0.01)		-0.03* (0.01)
Scottish National Party						-0.03 (0.02)		-0.03 (0.02)
Other						-0.01 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)
Leave vote (reference = Remain vote)						0.10*** (0.01)		0.10*** (0.01)
No vote (Brexit)						0.04*** (0.01)		0.04*** (0.01)
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Canberra/East Midlands</i>								
New South Wales / East of England		0.01 (0.03)		0.01 (0.03)		0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)
Northern Territory / London		0.12* (0.05)		0.12* (0.05)		0.04** (0.01)		0.04** (0.01)
Queensland / North East		0.02 (0.03)		0.02 (0.03)		-0.00 (0.02)		-0.00 (0.02)
South Australia / North West		0.01 (0.03)		0.01 (0.03)		0.01 (0.01)		0.01 (0.01)
Tasmania / Northern Ireland		-0.01 (0.04)		-0.01 (0.04)		0.10*** (0.02)		0.10*** (0.02)
Victoria / Scotland		0.04 (0.03)		0.04 (0.03)		0.00 (0.02)		0.00 (0.02)
Western Australia/ South East		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)		0.02 (0.01)		0.02 (0.01)
South West						0.02 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)
Wales						0.04* (0.02)		0.04* (0.02)
West Midlands						0.01 (0.01)		0.01 (0.01)
Yorkshire and the Humber						-0.01 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)
Wave (Australia only)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)				
Constant	0.55*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.55*** (0.01)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.02)
R ²	0.02	0.32	0.02	0.32	0.01	0.20	0.01	0.20
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.31	0.02	0.31	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.20
Observations	4585	4585	4585	4585	5482	5482	5482	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

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

Table E.1: Extreme right attitudes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)			-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel weather report</i>								
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Male		0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)		0.01* (0.01)		0.01* (0.01)
Age		0.00*** (0.00)		0.00*** (0.00)		-0.00*** (0.00)		-0.00*** (0.00)
Authoritarian attitudes		0.29*** (0.02)		0.29*** (0.02)		0.27*** (0.02)		0.27*** (0.02)
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Advanced Diploma/ Level 2</i>								
Bachelor Degree Level / No Qualifications / Level 1		0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)		0.05*** (0.01)		0.05*** (0.01)
Certificate Level / Level 3		0.01 (0.01)		0.01 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)
Graduate Diploma/ Level 4		0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)		-0.03*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)
Postgraduate Degree Level		0.03* (0.01)		0.03* (0.01)				
School Qualification		0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)				
Other		-0.00 (0.02)		-0.00 (0.02)				
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Liberal Party and National/ Conservative</i>								
Labor / Labour		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.02 (0.01)		-0.02 (0.01)
One Nation (Katters Aus) / Brexit Party		0.11*** (0.02)		0.11*** (0.02)		0.10*** (0.03)		0.10*** (0.03)
Greens / Green		-0.02* (0.01)		-0.02* (0.01)		-0.03 (0.02)		-0.03 (0.02)
Others/Liberal Democrats		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.02)
Scottish National Party						-0.02 (0.03)		-0.02 (0.03)
Other						-0.00 (0.01)		-0.00 (0.01)
Leave vote (reference = Remain vote)						0.08*** (0.01)		0.08*** (0.01)
No vote (Brexit)						0.04*** (0.01)		0.04*** (0.01)
<i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Canberra/East Midlands</i>								
New South Wales / East of England		-0.02 (0.03)		-0.02 (0.03)		-0.00 (0.02)		-0.00 (0.02)
Northern Territory / London		0.06 (0.05)		0.06 (0.05)		0.02 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)
Queensland / North East		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.02)		-0.01 (0.02)
South Australia / North West		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.00 (0.02)		-0.00 (0.02)
Tasmania / Northern Ireland		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)		0.10*** (0.03)		0.10*** (0.03)
Victoria / Scotland		0.00 (0.03)		0.00 (0.03)		-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.02)
Western Australia/ South East		-0.03 (0.03)		-0.03 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.02)		-0.01 (0.02)
South West						0.00 (0.02)		0.00 (0.02)
Wales						0.01 (0.02)		0.01 (0.02)
West Midlands						-0.01 (0.02)		-0.01 (0.02)
Yorkshire and the Humber						-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.02)
Wave (Australia only)	-0.48*** (0.01)	-0.47*** (0.01)	-0.48*** (0.01)	-0.47*** (0.01)				
Constant	0.96*** (0.01)	0.70*** (0.03)	0.96*** (0.01)	0.71*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.17*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.03)
R ²	0.58	0.63	0.58	0.63	0.01	0.13	0.01	0.13
Adj. R ²	0.58	0.63	0.58	0.63	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.12
Observations	4175	4175	4175	4175	4481	4481	4481	4481

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

Table E.3: Extreme right norms

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
Baseline category: The actor is not respectable								
Among those who find the actor respectable								
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	-0.45*** (0.12)	-0.41** (0.14)	-0.48** (0.18)	-0.47* (0.19)	-0.39*** (0.07)	-0.51*** (0.08)	-0.42*** (0.10)	-0.50*** (0.11)
Challenged interview					-0.75*** (0.07)	-0.96*** (0.08)	-0.77*** (0.11)	-0.94*** (0.11)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	-0.16 (0.08)	-0.18* (0.09)	-0.21 (0.23)	-0.30 (0.24)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.11)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.06 (0.25)	0.13 (0.26)			0.08 (0.14)	-0.03 (0.16)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.04 (0.15)	-0.05 (0.16)
Constant	0.80*** (0.18)	-2.21*** (0.52)	0.82*** (0.21)	-2.15*** (0.53)	-0.17** (0.06)	-1.16*** (0.26)	-0.15* (0.07)	-1.18*** (0.26)
Among those who answer Don't Know								
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	-3.85*** (0.12)	-4.18*** (0.13)	-3.86*** (0.17)	-4.21*** (0.18)	-1.36*** (0.12)	-1.49*** (0.12)	-1.38*** (0.17)	-1.47*** (0.17)
Challenged interview					-1.64*** (0.12)	-1.82*** (0.13)	-1.61*** (0.17)	-1.75*** (0.17)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	-0.19 (0.10)	-0.22* (0.10)	-0.22 (0.20)	-0.28 (0.20)	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.13)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.03 (0.23)	0.06 (0.24)			0.03 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.24)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							-0.06 (0.24)	-0.13 (0.25)
Constant	3.59*** (0.18)	1.79** (0.56)	3.61*** (0.21)	1.82** (0.57)	-0.84*** (0.08)	-2.36*** (0.38)	-0.84*** (0.09)	-2.38*** (0.38)
Covariate adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Log Likelihood	-3699.78	-3251.35	-3699.76	-3251.20	-4870.78	-4382.67	-4870.58	-4382.52
Observations	5062	5062	5062	5062	5482	5482	5482	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only). We include a dummy variable in the Australian case to control for the two Australian waves.

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

Table E.4: Respectability of the extreme right actor

	Culturally dissimilar people are not allowed in Australia	Only in favour of skilled migrants	People from Africa are not allowed in Australia	Criminal responsibility of African gangs
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>				
Unchallenged interview	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel</i>				
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Constant	0.01 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.04)
Covariate adjustment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.25	0.28	0.20	0.28
Adj. R ²	0.24	0.27	0.20	0.27
Observations	4908	4862	4845	4738

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections and authoritarian attitudes.

We include a dummy variable in the Australian case to control for the two Australian waves.

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

Table E.5: Attitudinal Items- Australia

	Culturally dissimilar people are not allowed in Australia	Only in favour of skilled migrants	People from Africa are not allowed in Australia	Criminal responsibility of African gangs
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>				
Unchallenged interview	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel</i>				
Sky News Platform	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.10* (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.09* (0.04)
Covariate adjustment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes				
R ²	0.16	0.17	0.12	0.20
Adj. R ²	0.16	0.17	0.12	0.20
Observations	4720	4616	4586	4487

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections and authoritarian attitudes.

We include a dummy variable in the Australian case to control for the two Australian waves.

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

Table E.6: Normative Items- Australia

	Ban the construction of mosques	Enact a travel ban against refugees	A travel ban would stop terrorist attacks	A travel ban would stop rapes	Refugees are terrorists
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>					
Unchallenged interview	0.03** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Challenged interview	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel</i>					
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.05 (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.02)
Covariate adjustment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.14
Adj. R ²	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.14
Observations	5482	5482	5482	5482	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote.

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

Table E.7: Attitudinal Items- UK

	Ban the construction of mosques	Enact a travel ban against refugees	A travel ban would stop terrorist attacks	A travel ban would stop rapes	Refugees are terrorists
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>					
Unchallenged interview	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.10*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Challenged interview	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
<i>Reference: Youtube Channel</i>					
Sky News Platform	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Constant	0.14***	0.17***	0.20***	0.14***	0.20***
Covariate adjustment	Yes (0.03)	Yes (0.03)	Yes (0.03)	Yes (0.03)	Yes (0.03)
R ²	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.06
Adj. R ²	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.06
Observations	4945	5028	4995	4895	5032

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote.

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

Table E.8: Normative Items- UK

F Robustness checks

F.1 Manipulation checks

	Sky News		YouTube Channel		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<i>Australia</i>					
Mainstream	3.369	1.234	3.102	1.303	0.248***
Trustworthy	3.147	1.331	2.893	1.154	0.246***
<i>United Kingdom</i>					
Mainstream	4.000	1.035	3.012	1.282	0.985***
Trustworthy	3.598	2.927	2.927	1.172	0.665***

The question was only asked in the second wave for the Australian experiment (March 2022).

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

Table F.1: t-tests comparing how mainstream and trustworthy Sky News and YouTube Channels are in Australia and the United Kingdom

	Australia	United Kingdom
Correct Content (in %)	95.15	95.06
Correct Platform (in %)	84.25	87.38
Correct Content and Platform (in %)	81.77	77.23

The checks were only included in the second wave for the Australian experiment (March 2022).

Table F.2: Manipulation Checks

F.2 Attention checks

F.3 Those who rank Sky News as mainstream

	Beliefs		Norms		Actor	
	Aus	UK	Aus	UK	Aus	UK
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>						
Unchallenged interview	-0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.71*** (0.01)	-0.12*** (0.01)
Challenged interview		0.00 (0.00)		-0.03* (0.01)		-0.13*** (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>						
Sky News Platform	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.03 (0.04)	0.00 (0.00)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.13** (0.04)	0.87*** (0.05)	0.09** (0.03)
Covariate Adjustment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.03		0.04	0.04	0.53	0.07
Adj. R ²	0.03		0.04	0.03	0.53	0.06
Observations	5062	5482	5062	5482	5062	5482

Standard errors in parentheses.

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only).

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

Table F.3: Attrition

	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.06** (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)			-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04* (0.02)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							-0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Constant	0.40*** (0.01)	-0.16* (0.07)	0.40*** (0.01)	-0.16* (0.07)	0.33*** (0.01)	0.06** (0.02)	0.32*** (0.01)	0.05* (0.02)
Covariate Adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.35	0.01	0.35	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.21
Observations	1614	1614	1614	1614	4503	4503	4503	4503

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; check only included in the second wave of the Australian experiment.

Table F.4: Extreme right attitudes: with attention checks

	Australia				United Kingdom			
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.06** (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Challenged interview					0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News Platform	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			-0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)			-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Constant	0.40*** (0.01)	-0.16* (0.07)	0.40*** (0.01)	-0.15* (0.07)	0.33*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.03)	0.33*** (0.01)	0.14*** (0.03)
Covariate Adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.23	0.01	0.23	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.12
Observations	1471	1471	1471	1471	3702	3702	3702	3702

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; check only included in the second wave of the Australian experiment. Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only).

Table F.5: Extreme right norms: with attention checks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Australia				United Kingdom			
Baseline category: The actor is not respectable								
Among those who find the actor respectable								
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	-0.45*** (0.12)	-0.41** (0.14)	-0.48** (0.18)	-0.47* (0.19)	-0.41*** (0.08)	-0.52*** (0.09)	-0.43*** (0.12)	-0.49*** (0.13)
Challenged interview					-0.83*** (0.09)	-1.05*** (0.09)	-0.85*** (0.12)	-1.01*** (0.13)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News platform	-0.16 (0.08)	-0.18* (0.09)	-0.21 (0.23)	-0.30 (0.24)	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.12)	0.01 (0.12)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.06 (0.25)	0.13 (0.26)			0.04 (0.16)	-0.07 (0.18)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							0.04 (0.17)	-0.09 (0.18)
Constant	0.80*** (0.18)	-2.21*** (0.52)	0.82*** (0.21)	-2.15*** (0.53)	-0.37*** (0.07)	-1.66*** (0.30)	-0.35*** (0.08)	-1.69*** (0.30)
Among those who answer Don't Know								
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview	-3.85*** (0.12)	-4.18*** (0.13)	-3.86*** (0.17)	-4.21*** (0.18)	-1.39*** (0.13)	-1.52*** (0.13)	-1.38*** (0.18)	-1.45*** (0.18)
Challenged interview					-1.65*** (0.13)	-1.85*** (0.14)	-1.58*** (0.18)	-1.72*** (0.19)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i>								
Sky News platform	-0.19 (0.10)	-0.22* (0.10)	-0.22 (0.20)	-0.28 (0.20)	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.06 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.14)	0.03 (0.14)
<i>Reference: YouTube Channel weather report</i>								
Unchallenged interview x Sky News platform			0.03 (0.23)	0.06 (0.24)			-0.02 (0.25)	-0.14 (0.26)
Challenged interview x Sky News platform							-0.15 (0.26)	-0.27 (0.27)
Constant	3.59*** (0.18)	1.79** (0.56)	3.61*** (0.21)	1.82** (0.57)	-0.84*** (0.08)	-2.43*** (0.41)	-0.85*** (0.10)	-2.48*** (0.41)
Covariate adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Log Likelihood	-3699.78	-3251.35	-3699.76	-3251.20	-3897.62	-3537.54	-3897.38	-3536.97
Observations	5062	5062	5062	5062	4503	4503	4503	4503

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, and Brexit vote (UK only).
The check was only included in the second wave for the Australian experiment (March 2022).

Table F.6: Respectability of extreme right actors: with attention checks

	United Kingdom					
	Attitudes		Norms		Actors	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Reference: Unchallenged interview</i>						
Challenged interview	-0.04*** (0.02)	-0.04*** (0.02)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.01)
Sky News platform	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Constant	0.38*** (0.01)	0.13*** (0.03)	0.40*** (0.01)	0.21*** (0.04)	0.47*** (0.02)	0.24*** (0.08)
Covariate adjustment	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.01	0.21	0.00	0.13	0.01	0.15
Adj. R ²	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.11
Observations	3635	3635	2997	2997	3635	3635

Standard errors in parentheses., *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Covariates: age, gender, education, region, vote in the 2019 elections, authoritarian attitudes, Brexit vote.

Table F.7: Media strategy effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Australia			United Kingdom		
	Attitudes	Norms	Actor	Attitudes	Norms	Actor
<i>Reference: Weather report</i>						
Unchallenged interview	0.06* (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	-0.91* (0.23)	0.02* (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	-0.46*** (0.07)
Sky News platform	0.05* (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.51* (0.23)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.07)
Constant	0.37*** (0.02)	0.40*** (0.02)	0.77 (0.46)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.34*** (0.01)	-0.36*** (0.08)
R ²	0.02	0.01		0.00	0.01	
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.01		0.00	0.00	
Log Likelihood			-402.39			-3184.27
Observations	576	526	628	3749	3171	3749

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; multinomial logit for effects on actors.

We only included manipulation checks in the second wave of the Australian study, hence the smaller N.

Table F.8: Respondents who rank Sky News as a mainstream platform (pre-treatment)

Appendix References

APSA. 2020. “Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research.” https://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/diversity%20and%20inclusion%20prgms/Ethics/Final_Principles%20with%20Guidance%20with%20intro.pdf?ver=2020-04-20-211740-153.

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