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*Diane Bolet
Florian Foos*

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Diane Bolet
University of Zurich
bolet@ipz.uzh.ch

Florian Foos
London School of Economics and Political Science
f.foos@lse.ac.uk

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URPP Equality of Opportunity, University of Zurich, Schoenberggasse 1, 8001 Zurich, Switzerland
info@equality.uzh.ch, www.urpp-equality.uzh.ch

Media platforming and the normalisation of extreme right views

Diane Bolet* Florian Foos†

Abstract

As far right views are increasingly becoming socially acceptable, it remains unclear under what conditions the media contribute to this normalisation process. Drawing on two pre-registered, placebo-controlled survey experiments that use the real-world audio of interviews with extreme right actors in Australia and Britain, we find that platforming extreme right actors on either the TV channel Sky News or the online platform Youtube fuels agreement with extreme right statements and leads participants to believe that a larger share of the population supports extreme right views. Interviewers' strategies of engaging with extreme right actors matter: While unchallenged interviews consistently result in the radicalisation of participants' attitudes and beliefs, interviewers who challenge the accuracy of the false statements made, mitigate attitudinal effects and lower normalisation effects. While platforming affects beliefs, we find that exposure backfires on the ratings of the actor who advocates for those beliefs, especially in the critical interview condition.

*University of Zurich, bolet@ipz.uzh.ch

†Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science, f.foos@lse.ac.uk

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Introduction

The growing success of the far right in recent years has been accompanied by the mainstreaming and normalisation of far-right ideas and actors (Valentim 2021, Bischof and Wagner 2019). We have entered an era where far right parties and actors are brought into mainstream politics and are becoming more widely accepted in society. While this development has been ongoing for populist radical right parties (Mudde 2019), the Overton window is currently pushed further to the right: Extreme right actors, who openly advocate for violence and operate outside the democratic constitutional consensus, are increasingly receiving exposure. Examples of ideas pushed by such actors include theories about white supremacy, the Islamisation of Europe and the "great replacement theory".¹ How do these ideas, that once appeared too extreme for mainstream right politicians and even for populist radical right actors to repeat, become normalised?

One of the most frequently mentioned factors that may be complicit in the growing acceptance and spread of extreme right views across Western democracies are the media, both conservative and mainstream outlets, ranging from the tabloid press (Foos and Bischof 2022), to TV channels (Broockman and Kalla 2022) and social media platforms (Álvarez-Benjumea and Winter 2018). With the ownership of many media outlets concentrated in the hands of wealthy, conservative entrepreneurs (Foos and Bischof 2022, Grossman et al. 2022)², extreme right actors are increasingly given a platform to air their controversial views, which often lie way out of what used to be the conservative mainstream. What we mean by that is not only that populist right leaders like Marine Le Pen or Donald Trump are frequently given a platform in the media today, but that even more extreme, fringe actors with no democratic legitimisation, who frequently break taboos and incite audiences, are platformed to comment on events. Moreover, similar extreme content is broadcast freely on the internet and is popularised on platforms such as YouTube, where it reaches millions of views (Álvarez-Benjumea and Winter 2018, Munger and Phillips 2022).

¹This theory, which originated in France in the 2010s, advances that the native population is being demographically and culturally replaced with non-white peoples—especially from Muslim-majority countries—through mass migration, demographic growth and a drop in the birth rate of white Europeans.

²As an example, only three companies—DMG Media, News UK and Reach—dominate 90% of the national newspaper market in the UK (MRC 2021).

While a growing literature has identified the effects of exposure to TV networks such as Fox News on right-wing votes and attitudes (Arceneaux et al. 2016, Broockman and Kalla 2022), it is only recently that political scientists have started to pay attention to the mechanisms by which the media spread far right views. Broockman and Kalla (2022) argue that Fox News provides viewers with "selective partisan media exposure", emphasising stories and issues that benefit conservatives. The platforming of extreme right actors and their views is another potentially important mechanism that can contribute to explaining how the traditional media³ spread and normalise radical right views. While conservative media such as Fox News in the United States or GB News in Britain are unapologetic for platforming extreme actors, mainstream media networks such as CNN or the BBC have argued that they invite extreme right actors to expose their ill-founded views. Interviewing these actors is meant to undermine their credibility and expose their views, which should lead to a decrease in support for these actors and their views. By contrast, movements to de-platform extreme right actors from media and other platforms claim that such interviews not only legitimise racist, xenophobic and anti-democratic views that these speakers advocate, but that they also give them visibility and reach. There is a growing literature on de-platforming on social media, which shows that de-platforming extreme right actors, for instance after the storming of the US Capitol on January 6, lead to a decrease in exposure (Rauchfleisch and Kaiser 2021, Buntain et al. 2023).

We contribute to that literature by showing that uncritical exposure to extreme right actors and views⁴, on either TV or online channels, leads to the spread of extreme right attitudes and norms, and that even critical exposure, while damaging actors' reputations among the general public, normalises extreme right beliefs. To do that, we draw on two large survey experiments based on real-life interviews with extreme right activists on Murdoch-owned Sky News in Australia and the United Kingdom (UK). Using factorial designs, we vary whether subjects are exposed to the audio of the interviews where the extreme right actor is unchallenged (as well as challenged in the UK experiment) or to a neutral content, a weather

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.

⁴Throughout this paper we use the word "extreme right" since the interviews 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.

report. The second experimental factor varies whether the network which broadcasts the interview/forecast is traditional mainstream channel (i.e. Sky News) or an online platform (i.e. YouTube).

We find consistent evidence across the two countries: In line with pre-registered expectations, instead of exposure leading to rejection, unchallenged interviews, as often seen in conservative TV and online channels, consistently fuel extreme right attitudes and foster the belief that a larger share of the public subscribe to these views. Uncritical platforming normalises extreme right views. When interviewers robustly challenge extreme right actors during interviews, as seen in some mainstream outlets, effects on attitudes subside, but platforming continues to contribute to the normalisation of extreme right beliefs. While attitudes and norm perceptions shift to the right, audiences perceive extreme right actor more negatively, especially in the critical interview condition. This finding, which is against our pre-registered expectations, suggests that exposure entails a trade-off for extreme right actors: they trade personal popularity with the increasing popularity and normalisation of their views.

We also investigate potential mechanisms that can explain our findings. Attitudinal effects appear to be driven by individuals updating their beliefs about the accuracy of the statements made by extreme right actors. If interviewers robustly question the accuracy of these statements and provide facts, individuals' beliefs in the accuracy of these statements decline, in turn decreasing their agreement with those statements. By contrast, individuals appear able to correctly identify the actors as extreme right even if the interviewer provides little context and does not challenge the actor, which explains why the image of the actor is perceived more negatively in all interview conditions.

In contrast to expectations, we show that exposure to extreme right actors on the online platform YouTube is as effective at shifting attitudes and norms as platforming on the traditional mainstream media outlet Sky News: This is the case in both Australia, where Sky News has a slightly more conservative tilt, and in the UK, where this is not the case. The results of this paper hence suggest that platforming contributes to radicalising audiences, but it does so via increased exposure to extreme right actors and their views rather than via any added legitimacy that mainstream TV channels convey.

Our study contributes to the literature on media effects, public opinion, de-platforming and the normalisation of extreme right beliefs. Relying on a series of carefully designed survey experiments based on real-life interviews, we combine control over the treatments that study participants are exposed to, and the ability to debrief participants after exposure, with increased realism. Unlike previous media studies on the extreme right that predominantly use marginal or openly partisan media outlets (Atton 2006, Cammaerts 2009), we use real-life interviews that are extracted from a traditional mainstream media platform (i.e. Sky News) to test if individuals are more likely to change their views if controversial claims are conveyed on a mainstream platform and if these claims are not challenged by the journalist. We also test these exposure effects on a wide array of issues generally pushed by the extreme right (e.g. immigration, racism, terrorism, crime) and on individuals' perceptions towards two extreme right activists in two different countries (e.g. Blair Cottrell in Australia and Tommy Robinson in the UK). Finally, we make a contribution to the nascent literature on social norms (Valentim 2021, Bischof and Wagner 2019, Dinas et al. 2022). While many papers mention the media as a contributing factor, we show how critical and uncritical media exposure leads to the normalisation of extreme right views.

Beyond its theoretical and empirical importance, this paper has policy implications with regards to the platforming of extreme right actors on various media platforms. In times where the consumption of extremist contents is rampant on social media, it is vital to know that platforming any content, regardless of the platform, is likely to contribute to the normalisation process. On a brighter note, journalists can alleviate most attitudinal effects on individuals if they question the factual accuracy of the extreme right actors' claims.

Theory

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

The fourth wave of post-war far right politics in industrialised countries is characterised by the mainstreaming and normalisation of far-right actors and ideas. While far right politics was largely excluded from post WW2 centre-right parties, it has now become an integral

part of the political system (Mudde 2019). Extreme right political actors have managed to mainstream their divisive and racist discourse at the same time as positions that are traditionally associated with the extreme right (e.g. banning all types of immigration or classifying all people of one religion or nationality as terrorists), are now taken over by mainstream actors⁵ (Mudde 2019).

The role of media has often been mentioned in relation to the growing presence of far right actors and ideas into the mainstream. 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 citizen's interest in a given topic (Ellinas 2010, Gattinara and Froio 2018)⁶. Quasi-experiments, which have explained 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 et al. 2022, DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007, Ladd and Lenz 2009). Survey experiments that identify the effects of exposure to different arguments (Coppock 2023, Guess and Coppock 2018) find that individuals update their attitudes in the direction of the argument. 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 messengers, or if there is heterogeneity in how individuals respond based on the type of message and messenger that they encounter. There are good theoretical reasons to believe that a majority of people would be willing to reject extreme right arguments based on their political predispositions. 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

⁵Terrorist attacks are, for instance, framed as threats of 'political Islam' to 'western values', which is a framing specific to the far right.

⁶The 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.

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), even when strong partisan cues are present (Tappin et al. 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 et al. 2016, Tankard and Paluck 2017). However, such norms have been eroding quickly in recent years (Bursztyn et al. 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 et al. 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 the 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 political newcomers 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 media outlets may be considered complicit in the process of persuasion and normalisation of extreme right views, and of the increased respectability of extreme right actors.

Strategies to identify the causal effects of media exposure include field experimental (Gerber et al. 2009, ?) and quasi-experimental designs (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007, Martin and Yurukoglu 2017, Foos and Bischof 2022) with the random assignment of newspapers subscriptions (Gerber et al. 2009), and placement of television channels on the remote control as strategies to disentangle causality in observational settings (Martin and Yurukoglu 2017). Randomised survey experiments have been used to test mechanisms and increase the control that researchers have over exposure to specific messages (Schuck and De Vreese 2006, Maier and Rittberger 2008, De Vreese et al. 2011). However, some of these experiments use student or self-selected samples, and it is difficult to say if effects would generalise to the population of interest. Our study stands in this tradition, but increases environmental and external validity by a) exploiting two similar real-life interviews with two extreme right political actors and b) by conducting large population-based survey experiments (Mutz 2011) on representative samples of the Australian and British population. We preregistered the following hypotheses on OSF⁷:

- **Opinion change 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) think that the rest of the population will agree with these views, and c) think that the actor is more respectable.*

⁷The full pre-analysis plan and other documentation are available here <https://osf.io/nvzb2/>.

The mediating role of the type of platform and media strategy of the journalist

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, Fox News 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, which makes it impossible for them to know 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 in a traditional media platform would thus be assigned more credibility than one presented in an online platform. We therefore preregistered the following hypothesis:

- **Type of platform hypothesis:** *Subjects will 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) are more likely to perceive the extreme right actor as credible if the interview is broadcast*

by a mainstream platform compared to a non-mainstream platform.

Second, the media strategies adopted by the journalists could further impact the support and normalisation of extreme right views and actors. Whether it is most effective to ignore, accommodate or challenge the radical right, is a question that political scientists have investigated since the radical right's arrival in 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)⁸. First, journalists can opt to disengage with the actors by refusing to platform them, which is a way to isolate them. This demarcation strategy is very rare as there are no countries where far right actors are truly ignored (Mudde 2019). The second strategy involves accommodating the extreme right actors by offering them a platform to spread their view without directly engaging with their views. The journalist gives him an implicit endorsement by making issues that are typically owned by far right 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 attitude by being overtly critical towards the extreme right actors. This demarcation strategy means that the journalist can demonise or stigmatise the actors by pointing to the inaccuracy of the facts 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). In relation to news coverage, political scientists have shown that when heavily one-sided (i.e. predominantly negative or positive), framing any issue can move public opinion (Zaller 1992, Chong and Druckman 2007). The public would side with the dominant tone of the news coverage: it will support the opinion of the interviewee if the latter is largely broadcast in positive terms but will reject if it is negatively reported. Recent studies have corroborated the relevance of the one-sided messages and the accessibility of counter-frames on people's views (Chong and Druckman 2007).

⁸These strategies can be chosen based on the structure of the media system as well as political affiliations, ethical standards, and commercial interests of the different actors (news organizations, journalists, editors, etc.) that make up the media landscape (Ellinas 2010).

We may therefore assume that a journalist who challenges an extreme right actor would undermine the credibility of the actor's views. Discrediting an extreme right actor's image and statements would seriously weaken the 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 will 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) confer more legitimacy to the extreme right actor if the journalist does not challenge the extreme right actor.*

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. 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 base⁹ (ABC 2016). 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).¹⁰

⁹The subscriber base of Sky News Channel far exceeded that of Channel 7 and Channel 9 and had surpassed ABC News by March 2021.

¹⁰This 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

The Australian interview

On August 4, 2018, Sky News Australia¹¹, aired the interview¹² of the former United Patriots Front leader, an extreme right activist, Blair Cottrell. He expressed his anti-establishment and anti-immigration views on this one-to-one interview that lasted ten minutes. Cottrell explicitly claimed to represent the “silent voice of the majority” in his immigration position. He advocated in favour of both skills-based and “culture-based” migration in which Australia should not accept immigrants who were “too culturally dissimilar to Australia”. He also associated the rise of criminality with an increase of “African gangs”. Cottrell finally promoted his Lads Society, a men-only social club which involves 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 led the interviewer to quit Sky News since he adopted an accommodative media strategy and never challenged Cottrell’s claims, which resulted in a public apology by the channel¹³.

The segments that are used in the Australian experiment 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 Society¹⁴.

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

¹¹Sky News Australia is a free-to-air 24 hour cable and satellite channel. It is considered mainstream due to its growing popularity among viewers. It also has a large number of well-respected political journalists (e.g. Laura Jayes, David Speers). Amongst them, David Speers joined the ABC, Australia’s independent public broadcaster, after 19 years at Sky News Australia as a political editor. Although the channel has some right-wing segments such as *The After Dark Show*, the Cottrell interview was conducted as part of a politically neutral programme, entitled *The Adam Giles Show*.

¹²A recording of the interview is available on YouTube via the following link: <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QWmbNFmWMs4&t=455s>.

¹³See Guardian (2018) for more information on the case.

¹⁴We dropped questions about the political organisation in the second wave to focus on extreme right views and norms only.

case in Canterbury. During the one-hour interview¹⁵, 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 the introduction of a “Trump-style” travel ban to restrict the number of refugees from “failed states” because he associated refugees with terrorist attacks. He 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 that are used in the British experiment include Robinson’s views on the building of Mosques, the Trump-style travel ban, as well as his association of terrorist attacks and rape with refugees. We use both the full, critical version of the interview, and a version, where we take out the challenges by the interviewer, to closely resemble the style of interview that was broadcast on Sky News Australia.

The full transcripts of the interviews and weather reports in Australia and the UK are available in Section 1.5 in the Appendix.

Research Design

We take the audio recording of these two interviews because the quality of the videos is not very high¹⁶. Solely relying on an audio recording also allows us to isolate both the effects of the content and the effect of the explicitly announced media platform of the interview since respondents are not distracted by the visual expressions of the extreme right actors

¹⁵The whole interview is available on YouTube via the following link https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=pjz_Fg1TEBo.

¹⁶We couldn’t obtain the video footage of the interviews from Sky News Australia or Sky News UK.

and the interviewers but only focus on the interview. Studies in political communication have also shown that there are no differences in people’s learning and about how they feel about political issues (like trust) between audio recordings and video messages (Crigler and Neuman 1994, Babutsidze et al. 2021). While both audio and visual messages have been shown to have similar effects on political attitudes, they are both more powerful than written transcripts. Audio alone is just as effective as a combined audio and visual footage for sharing information.

The two experiments were approved by the Ethics Committee of our institution. The information and consent sheets given to Australian and British participants are displayed in documents 1.1 and 1.2 in the Appendix. Participants were debriefed extensively after they completed the experiment and any questionable information conveyed by the speaker was corrected. The debriefing forms for both studies are also displayed in documents 1.3 and 1.4 in the Appendix.

The Australian experiment

In the Australian experiment, we employ a 2x2 factorial design to test if exposing subjects to the audio increases the agreement with the activist’s extreme right views and image, the normalisation of such views and whether the type of platform enhances the effectiveness of the interview. The first experimental factor varies whether people are exposed to the audio of the unchallenged interview or to a weather report. We use a weather report because we assume the content to be neutral compared to the interview. The second factor varies whether the network which broadcasts the interview/forecast is a traditional mainstream platform (Sky News) or an alternative online platform (YouTube). Even though some people can 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 2x2 factorial design results in four distinct experimental groups as shown in Table 1. We fielded this experiment on a nationally representative sample of the Australian adult population (N=5,062) in two rounds administered by the survey firm *Survation* between 1-9 December 2020 and 2-9 March 2022¹⁷. When pooling the two samples together, we have around 1,250 respondents per group. To make sure our treatment worked, respondents were obliged to listen to the interview/report in full as they could not skip the interview¹⁸. The presenter in the audio recording mentioned the platform for both Sky News and the YouTube Channel. We also included a short clip at the start and end of each recording to remind respondents of the platform they were listening to. An Australian actor was recruited to announce the platform on which the interview and weather report were allegedly broadcast. These additions were meant to ensure that subjects understood the platform on which the interview or weather report was broadcast. All audio files last between 1"40 to 2"30.

| | | 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 |

Table 1: Experimental Design-The Australian Study

The British experiment

For the British experiment, we use a 3x2 factorial design where we vary whether subjects are either exposed to the audio of the interview, where the extreme right actor is challenged, to the interview where he is not challenged or to a weather report, and whether the network of the interview/forecast is traditional mainstream (Sky News) or alternative (YouTube Channel).

¹⁷We 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 its slight changes are to be found here in the OSF repository <https://osf.io/nvzb2/>.

¹⁸Dropout rates are not significantly different across experimental groups and range from 85 to 126 dropouts.

While four conditions of the British experiment exactly mirror those in the Australian experiment, the UK study extends the Australian experiment in significant ways. The British experiment allows us to investigate the media strategy hypothesis and its effects on the updating of extreme right beliefs. We test these hypotheses using segments where the journalist openly contests Robinson’s claims. While we use the exact same segments for the two groups who listen to the unchallenged and challenged interviews, those in the ‘challenged interview’ group also hear the journalist’s responses and criticism of Robinson’s claims.

The British experiment was fielded from July 21st to August 1st, 2022 to a nationally representative sample of British adults (N=5482) and with the same polling company than with the Australian experiment, Survation. The design of this experiment is shown in Table 2.

In a similar vein to the Australian experiment, we recruited a professional British actor who explained the content of the recording (interview or weather forecast), repeated the platform on which the interview/weather forecast is broadcast and briefly introduced Tommy Robinson in the case of the interview¹⁹. The actor slightly varied the description of Robinson between the unchallenged and the challenged interview. He mentioned Robinson’s ambivalent position in the unchallenged interview just like in the Australian experiment, but only emphasised Robinson’s negative description in the challenged interview to stress the treatment cues. To ensure that respondents complied with the treatments, respondents listened to the interview/report in full as they could not skip the interview²⁰. The recordings last between 1"30 to 2"30.

Outcome measurement and covariates

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),

¹⁹No description was needed in the Australian experiment since the presenter introduced Blair Cottrell. In the unchallenged interview condition, we mirrored the description the Australian presenter used and adapted it to Robinson’s case.

²⁰Dropout rates are not significantly different across experimental groups and range from 146 to 154 dropouts.

| | | 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>Challenged Interview</i> | Group 5 | Group 6 |

Table 2: Experimental Design-The British Study

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 the extreme right attitudes, we asked respondents how much they agreed with each extreme right statement mentioned by the extreme right actors in the interviews. 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 1 (1 means that respondents fully agree with Cottrell/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 2.5 and 2.7 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/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 et al. 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 reweight the single item on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 (1 means that respondents think 100% of Australians/British agree with Cottrell/Robinson’s views). We show the results of the normative scale in the main body but findings are similar for each item (see Tables 2.5 and 2.8 in the Appendix).

Our last outcome variable of interest 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 3.11 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.

Recorded pre-treatment covariates include gender, age, region, education, political ideology (authoritarian/libertarian attitudes) and vote in the 2019 general election. We also asked if respondents know the extreme right actor to test if the effect of the treatments is conditioned by ex-ante knowledge of the actor. Finally, we 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 in case of the respectability question and use a multinomial logit regression in this case. We test all predictions in country-specific models without and with covariate adjustment²¹. 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. As Table 3.10 shows, a large majority of participants (i.e. 81.77% in Australia and 77.23% in the UK) responded well to the content and the platform they listened to, which confirms that the experiment worked well.

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 in the OSF repository here <https://osf.io/nvzb2/>. The questionnaires of the Australian and British experiments are displayed in documents 1.5 and 1.6 in the Appendix.

²¹We present the results with all covariate coefficients in Tables 2.1 and 2.3 in the Appendix.

Results

Media effects on extreme right attitudes

Table 3 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 to Cohen's criteria, this effect is small to medium in terms of size ($d = 0.16$ for Australia and $d = 0.18$ for the United Kingdom). This effect is nonetheless substantive in this context as it means that the exposure prime in the unchallenged interview (as opposed to listening to the weather report) caused between 3 to 5%-point increase in individuals' support for the actor's extreme right positions voiced in the interview. This is substantive given that the actors' claims are very extreme. The direction and size of the effect are also comparable to existing field and survey experiments that show the persuasive effects of media (Guess and Coppock 2018, Guess et al. 2020), or of campaign advertisements (Gerber et al. 2011, Broockman and Kalla 2022). Coppock (2023) also finds that the persuasive effects range to five percentage points or a tenth of a standard deviation in response to a treatment like an op-ed, a video advertisement, or a scientific finding. If persuasive effects were any bigger, people would be constantly changing their minds depending on the latest cue they were exposed to and wild changes in attitudes would be commonplace. Figure 1 displays bar charts including the mean level of agreement with the extreme right actors' positions (scaled to range from 0 to 1) for each experimental group and 95% confidence intervals. All analyses corroborate the 'opinion change' hypothesis. In line with our expectations, unchallenged interviews shift participants attitudes further to the right.

Table 3 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 platforming affects

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 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 media with established reputations.

Additionally, we find that the confrontational strategy adopted by the journalist can be effective in reversing the updating effects of the extreme right interview. Indeed, Table 3 and Figure 1 show that British respondents who listened 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. This means that the journalist's critical questioning has reversed the effect of the exposure prime. As Figure 1 demonstrates, individual's support for extreme right attitudes is larger among those who are exposed to the unchallenged interview as opposed to those who are exposed to the challenged interview²². In line with our pre-registered expectations, the effect of the interview on support for extreme right views expressed by the extreme right actor in the interview is larger if the extreme right actor is not challenged by the journalist.

Media effects on extreme right norms

We now check if exposure to an extreme right interview normalises extreme right views in society. Table 4 replicates Table 3 but with a different dependent variable that asks respondents about what proportion of Australians/British they think agree with the extreme right statements made by the respective actor. The results are displayed in Table 4 and Figure 2. 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

²²In the Appendix, Table 3.15 shows that critical coverage reduces the effect of the interview on individuals' support for extreme right attitudes by 4 percentage-points.

| | (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 | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | 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 3: Extreme right attitudes

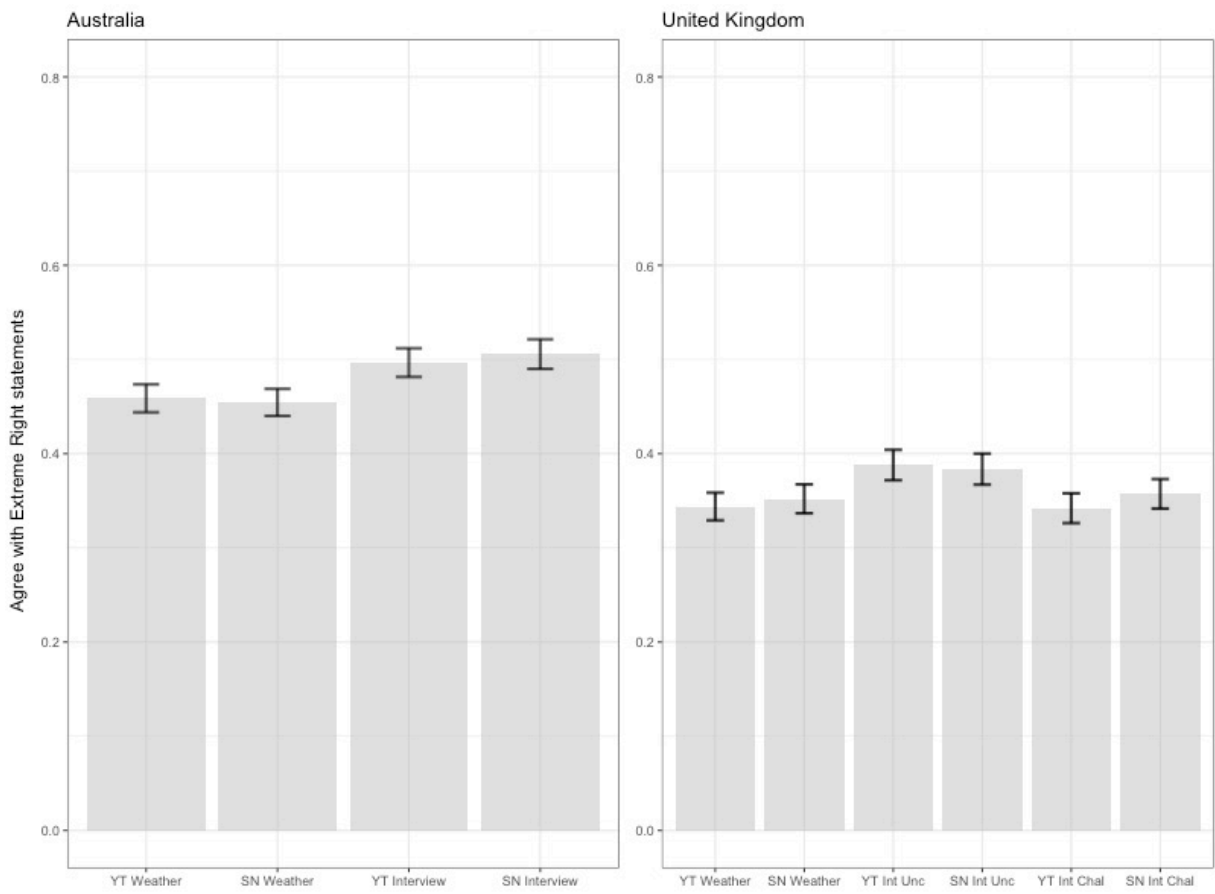


Figure 1: Mean levels of extreme right attitudes in Australia and the UK across experimental conditions. 95% Confidence intervals

weather report, regardless of the platform. The effects are statistically significant at the 0.001 level and are relatively similar across all models and countries. Listening to the unchallenged interview increases people's belief that society has moved in favour of these extreme right views by 2-3%-point in Australia, and by 6%-point in the UK, as opposed to listening to the weather forecast. These effects again translate into small to medium size effects in both countries ($d=0.16$ in Australia and 0.22 in the United Kingdom), and are thus comparable in size to the effects we found on individuals' support towards extreme right attitudes. 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.

Interestingly, and in line with our expectations, listening to the challenged interview attenuates the normalisation effect, but does not entirely reverse it. As shown in Table 3, the normalisation effect declines from 6%-points to 2%-points in substantive terms, but this is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the unchallenged interview still caused a 2%-point increase in people's belief that society agrees with these extreme right views, and this effect appears mainly to materialise among those who listened to the challenged interview on Sky News (see Figure 2), although the interaction effect is not significant by any conventional standards. This means that being exposed to an interview where the 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 interview adopts an accommodative media strategy²³.

²³Indeed, 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

| | (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*** | 0.70*** | 0.96*** | 0.71*** | 0.34*** | 0.17*** | 0.34*** | 0.16*** |
| Covariate adjustment | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| | (0.01) | (0.03) | (0.01) | (0.03) | (0.01) | (0.03) | (0.01) | (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 |

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 4: Extreme right norms

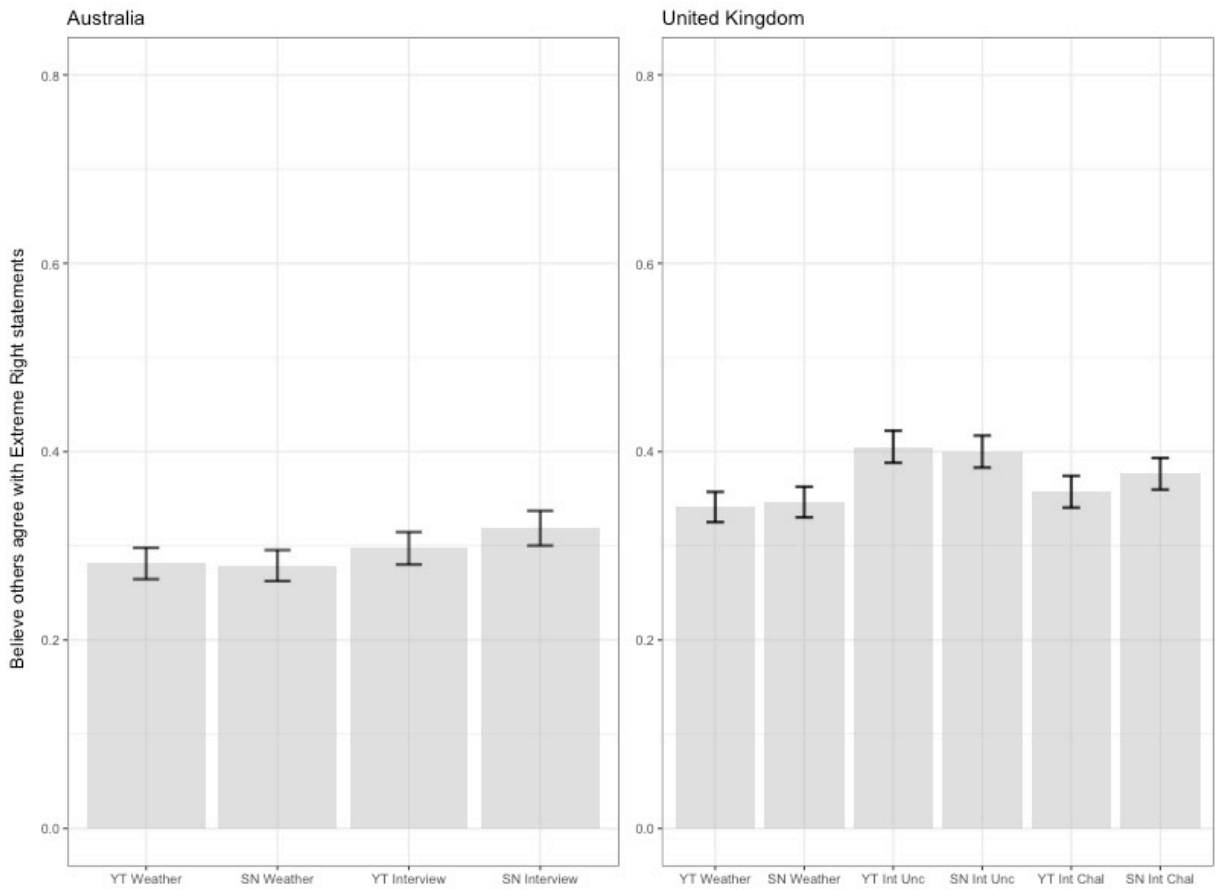


Figure 2: Perceived % of people who agree with extreme right views in Australia and the UK across experimental conditions. 95% Confidence intervals

Media effects on the respectability of the extreme right actor

Finally, we look at how platforming extreme right views affects the level of respectability of the actor who expressed these views. We use multinomial logit regression because Don't Knows are more prevalent in the placebo condition (the weather report) and excluding them might bias our results. The results, which are displayed in Figure 3 and in Table 2.4 in the Appendix²⁴, show strong and significant negative effects on perceived respectability in both countries. Unlike for attitudes and norms, the level of respectability of the extreme right actor decreases among the respondents who are exposed to the unchallenged interview no matter the platform, which goes against our pre-registered expectations. The effects are large and similar for both countries. The level of respectability towards the extreme right actor decreases by 9 to 11 percentage points for those who are assigned to the unchallenged interview (as opposed to those who listen to the weather report).

Interestingly, we find some evidence that a credible platform negatively affects the level of respectability of the actor in Australia. As shown in column 2 of Table 2.4 and Figure 3, the level of respectability towards Cottrell is lower 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 an extreme right actor is more tarnished when the interview is on a traditional mainstream platform. Yet, this effect, while in the same direction in the UK, it is not significant in this context. 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 2.4 and Figure 3 show that adopting a confrontational 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 8 percentage points less inclined to find Robinson respectable compared to those who listen to the unchallenged group, which corroborates our media

unchallenged interview (see Figure 2 and Table 3.15 in the Appendix). 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.

²⁴We focus on Figure 3 to estimate the magnitude of the effects since it is hard to interpret the coefficients of the multinomial logit regression.

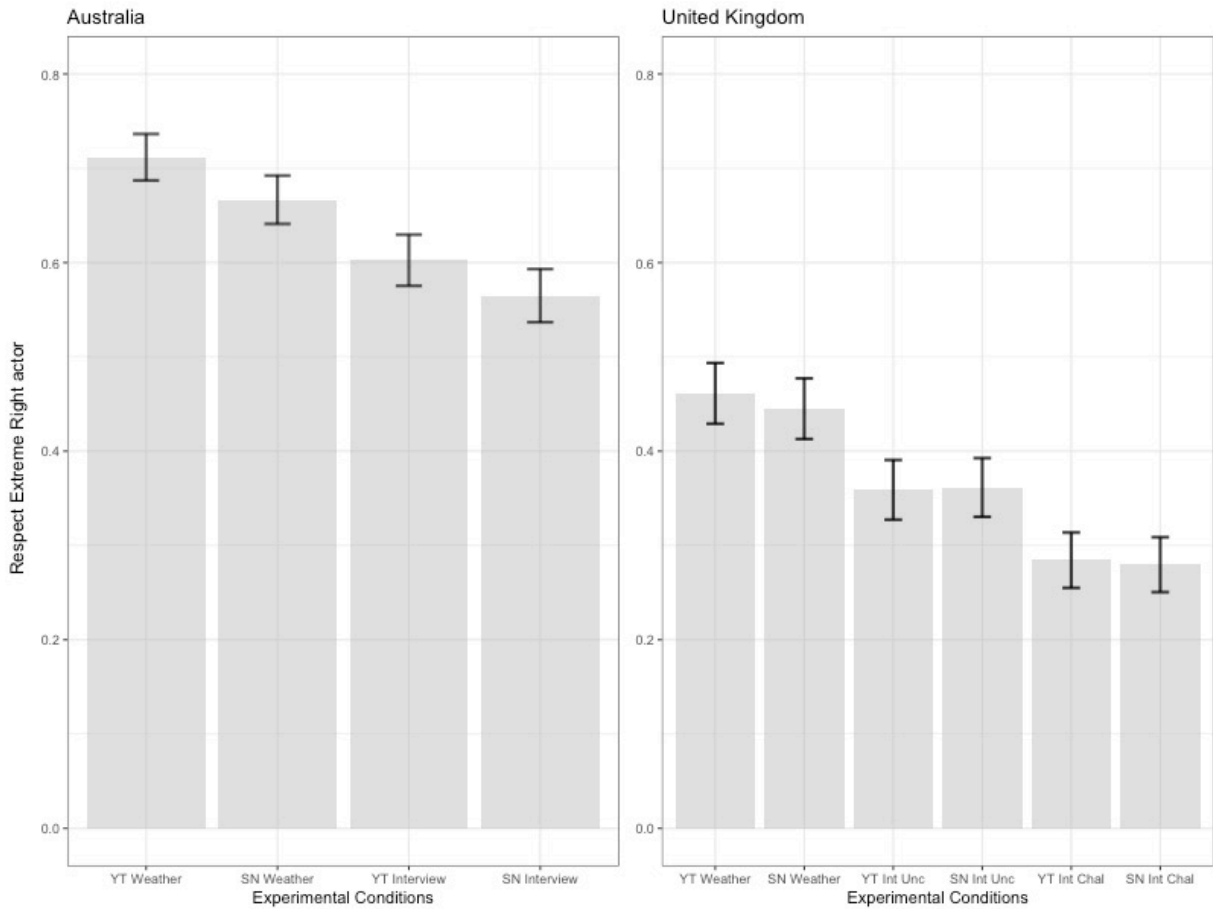


Figure 3: Level of respectability towards the extreme right actor in Australia and the UK across experimental conditions. 95% Confidence intervals

strategy hypothesis. The effect of the interview on the respectability of the extreme right actor is larger if the extreme right actor is not challenged by the journalist. Undermining the credibility of an extreme right actor also tarnishes his reputation.

Manipulation, attrition and attention checks

We report a series of manipulation, attrition and attention checks in the Appendix. First, as expressed earlier, the manipulation checks were successful, which means that the cues were well understood by respondents. As Table 3.10 shows, a large majority of participants were able to identify the type of content and platform they listened to, which confirms that the manipulation worked well.

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 outcome variables, we had to check that there was no differential attrition for all outcome variables. As shown in Table 3.11, we found no differential attrition for extreme right attitudes or norms, but we found some differences for the level of respectability of the actor. This explains why we use multinomial logit models and included the Don't Know as a separate category for this latter dependent variable.

Third, our findings are robust to the exclusion of respondents who did not pass the pre-treatment attention check (see Tables 3.12, 3.13 and 3.14 in the Appendix)²⁵. Since it is only a small minority who failed the check (i.e. 12.59% in Australia and 17.86% in the UK), we presented our main findings with all respondents.

Fourth, we are confident in our null findings related to the type of platform because Sky News was considered more mainstream and trustworthy than the YouTube Channel in both countries. 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 UK²⁶. Two-paired t-tests (see Table 4.16 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 those who consider Sky News to be mainstream.

Finally, our findings are not affected by the respondents who knew the actor prior to the treatment (to one exception). We replicate the main tables including those who have heard of the actor as a covariate and as an interaction with the treatment. The results, which are displayed in Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 4.19, show that our models remain unchanged,

²⁵There is one exception with the interaction between unchallenged interview and platform on individual's support for extreme right attitudes which goes in the same direction than in the main analysis but is significant at $p < .05$ (see model 8 of Table 3.12).

²⁶Mean 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 Sky News vs for 3.78 for ABC. In the UK, we have 3.60 for Sky News vs 3.61 for the BBC.

except for the effect on the level of the respectability of the actor. Indeed, we find reverse effects between the two countries. While the level of respectability of Cottrell becomes lower for the Australian respondents who have heard of Cottrell as opposed to those who have not heard of him, the level of respectability towards Robinson becomes larger among those who have heard of him.

Mechanisms

While we have identified the role that media platforming plays in influencing people's positions towards extreme right views and norms, we now delve deeper into the mechanisms that can explain these results. One may for instance assume that individuals may become more supportive of such positions because their latent ideological priors are triggered once they are exposed to the unchallenged interview. This would mean that only those who share these extreme right views *ex ante*, i.e. those with authoritarian attitudes or those who vote for parties that defend these views, would be more responsive to the exposure prime. However, another mechanism might be that individuals genuinely update their positions when exposed to the actor's statements (see Coppock (2023) for this mechanism).

We first run subgroup analyses to test if the exposure effect is driven by those respondents who hold extreme-right preconceived opinions to assess the former mechanism. We report the subgroup analyses where we observe the effect of listening to the unchallenged and challenged interview as opposed to the weather report on support for extreme right attitudes (in Table 5) and extreme right norms (in Table 6) reports the results conditional on authoritarian attitudes and vote choice in Australia and the United Kingdom. We find no significant interaction effects across any of the models for all variables and in both countries, apart from a few exceptions that all go against the "preconceived opinions" hypothesis. Indeed, those who would traditionally be more supportive of extreme right statements, i.e. Brexit voters, are actually less inclined to agree with these views or believe that others share these views when exposed to the interview, when compared to Conservative voters. Additionally, Australian Labor voters think that more Australians would agree with these statements when exposed to the interview than Conservative voters. These exceptions remain

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Australia | | United Kingdom | |
| Unchallenged interview | 0.02 (0.03) | 0.03** (0.01) | -0.01 (0.03) | 0.05*** (0.01) |
| Challenged interview | | | 0.04 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) |
| Sky News platform | -0.00 (0.01) | -0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) |
| Authoritarian attitudes | 1.27*** (0.06) | 1.28*** (0.04) | 0.57*** (0.04) | 0.57*** (0.03) |
| Unchallenged interview x authoritarian attitudes | 0.03 (0.08) | | 0.09 (0.06) | |
| Challenged interview x authoritarian attitudes | | | -0.07 (0.04) | (0.03) |
| <i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Liberal Party and National/ Conservative</i> | | | | |
| Labor / Labour | -0.08*** (0.01) | -0.08*** (0.01) | -0.08*** (0.01) | -0.06*** (0.01) |
| One Nation (Katters Aus) / Brexit party | 0.16*** (0.02) | 0.18*** (0.03) | 0.10*** (0.03) | 0.19*** (0.04) |
| Greens / Green | -0.10*** (0.01) | -0.09*** (0.02) | -0.08*** (0.02) | -0.11*** (0.02) |
| Others/ Others | -0.07*** (0.01) | -0.07*** (0.01) | -0.03*** (0.01) | -0.04** (0.01) |
| Scottish National Party (SNP) (UK) | | | -0.07*** (0.02) | -0.02 (0.03) |
| Lib Dems (UK) | | | -0.07*** (0.01) | -0.04* (0.02) |
| Unchallenged interview x Labor/ Labour | | 0.01 (0.02) | | -0.02 (0.02) |
| Unchallenged interview x One Nation/ Brexit party | | -0.03 (0.04) | | -0.12* (0.06) |
| Unchallenged interview x Greens/ Green | | -0.02 (0.02) | | 0.04 (0.04) |
| Unchallenged interview x Others/ Others | | 0.00 (0.02) | | -0.00 (0.02) |
| Unchallenged x SNP | | | | -0.09* (0.04) |
| Challenged interview x Labour | | | | -0.01 (0.02) |
| Challenged interview x Brexit party | | | | -0.14* (0.06) |
| Challenged interview x Green | | | | 0.04 (0.04) |
| Challenged x Others | | | | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Challenged x Lib Dems | | | | -0.04 (0.03) |
| Challenged x SNP | | | | -0.05 (0.04) |
| Constant | -0.02 (0.04) | -0.03 (0.04) | 0.14*** (0.03) | 0.13*** (0.02) |
| Covariate Adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| R ² | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.18 | 0.18 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.18 | 0.18 |
| Observations | 4585 | 4585 | 5482 | 5482 |

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

Table 5: Mechanisms: Extreme right attitudes

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Australia | | United Kingdom | |
| Unchallenged interview | 0.02 (0.03) | 0.01 (0.01) | 0.05 (0.04) | 0.05** (0.02) |
| Challenged interview | | | 0.03 (0.04) | 0.03 (0.02) |
| Sky News platform | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) |
| Authoritarian attitudes | 0.58*** (0.05) | 0.58*** (0.04) | 0.43*** (0.05) | 0.43*** (0.03) |
| Unchallenged interview x authoritarian attitudes | -0.01 (0.07) | | 0.01 (0.07) | |
| Challenged interview x authoritarian attitudes | | | -0.02 | |
| <i>Reference (Aus/UK) : Liberal Party and National/ Conservative</i> | | | | |
| Labor / Labour | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.05*** (0.01) | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.05** (0.02) |
| One Nation (Katters Aus) / Brexit party | 0.11*** (0.02) | 0.08** (0.03) | 0.11*** (0.03) | 0.19*** (0.05) |
| Greens / Green | -0.02* (0.01) | -0.03 (0.02) | -0.05* (0.02) | -0.05 (0.04) |
| Others/ Others | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.05** (0.02) | -0.01 (0.03) |
| Lib Dems (UK) | | | -0.05** (0.02) | -0.01 (0.03) |
| Scottish National Party | | | -0.06* (0.03) | 0.02 (0.04) |
| Unchallenged interview x Labor/ Labour | | 0.03* (0.01) | | 0.02 (0.02) |
| Unchallenged interview x One Nation/ Brexit party | | 0.04 (0.03) | | -0.10 (0.06) |
| Unchallenged interview x Greens/ Green | | 0.01 (0.02) | | 0.04 (0.05) |
| Unchallenged x Others/ Others | | 0.01 (0.02) | | 0.04 (0.02) |
| Unchallenged x Lib Dems | | | | -0.05 (0.04) |
| Unchallenged x SNP | | | | -0.11* (0.05) |
| Challenged interview x Labour | | | | -0.01 (0.02) |
| Challenged interview x Brexit Party | | | | -0.12 (0.07) |
| Challenged party x Green | | | | -0.02 (0.05) |
| Challenged party x Lib Dems | | | | -0.08* (0.04) |
| Challenged party x SNP | | | | -0.11* (0.05) |
| Challenged party x Others | | | | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Constant | 0.70*** (0.04) | 0.71*** (0.03) | 0.20*** (0.03) | 0.20*** (0.03) |
| Covariate Adjustment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| R ² | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.11 | 0.12 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.11 | 0.11 |
| Observations | 4175 | 4175 | 4481 | 4481 |

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

Table 6: Mechanisms: Extreme right norms

| | 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 | Yes | Yes | Yes | 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.

We exclude the two control groups where respondents listen to the weather report in the last two columns.

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

Table 7: Mechanisms: Respectability of the actor

rare and also go in the opposite direction of what the mechanism would predict. Respondents did not update their views and norms conditional on their pre-conceived opinions. The fact that we do not find any heterogeneous effects with regards to authoritarian attitudes suggests that the interview moved everyone, regardless of their opinions or partisanship. We can therefore rule out the mechanism that people just reveal their ideological priors.

Since individuals who are initially supportive of the extreme right actors' positions (i.e. those with authoritarian attitudes) are as likely to update in line with the actors' views as those who initially disagree (i.e. those with libertarian attitudes), this also means that we find no backlash effects²⁷. Listening to the unchallenged or challenged interview on Sky News (or on the YouTube channel) does not make respondents move towards opposing ends of the scale in which authoritarian individuals would be even more in favour of extreme right attitudes while libertarian ones would reject these claims. This finding goes in line with existing studies that find no backlash effects (Guess and Coppock 2018, Bishin et al. 2016).

We then provide evidence consistent with the view that respondents are more likely to agree with radical right statements in the unchallenged condition because they are more likely to believe that these statements are accurate. In the British experiments, where we field questions that allow respondents to rate the accuracy of the statements expressed by Robinson, we find that respondents who are exposed to the unchallenged interview are more likely to believe that the extreme right statements are accurate. The results are displayed in Table 7. Platforming extreme right actors hence contributes to the normalisation process by making audiences believe that more people share these controversial views (as shown earlier) and by increasing people's belief in the accuracy of these views. People become more convinced of the accuracy of controversial ideas that become more socially accepted.

Additionally, the first two columns of Table 7 show that the respondents who are assigned to the challenged interview group are way less inclined (by around 15-19% point) to perceive the statements of the actor as accurate as opposed to the respondents who listen to the weather report. This highlights the role that fact checking can play in correcting controversial beliefs, which resonates with existing studies (Chan et al. 2017, Wood and Porter 2019). Having a journalist who questions the factual accuracy of extreme right actor's

²⁷See our discussion of the backlash thesis in the theory section.

claims appears to prevent individuals from adopting these claims.

Last but not least, the last two columns of Table 7 provide more information as to why the image of the actor is tarnished among those who listen to the interview. Indeed, 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 interview makes his far right ideology apparent. This effect materialises both in the unchallenged and in the challenged interview condition to almost the same extent. This means that challenging claims with facts rather than providing additional context is more effective in making people realise who the actor is, and disapprove more of him.

Conclusion

Does the platforming of extreme right actors contribute to the 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 to an extreme right actor leads to higher agreement with his statements and to the normalisation of these views in society. Our analysis on belief accuracy is consistent with a mechanism, which would suggest that people become persuaded of the accuracy of these views. However, the type of platform on which the extreme right actor diffuses his ideas does not appear to matter. Being exposed to an extreme right interview on a traditional mainstream or an alternative online platform has the same effect on attitudes and norms. Drawing on the UK experiment, we also show the relevance of the journalist's confrontational stance towards the actor. Individuals conform more to extreme right views and think that these views are more widespread in society if the actor's false claims are not challenged by the journalist. Having a journalist challenge the actor's ideas counteracts the attitudinal effects and makes people believe that his statements are inaccurate. Nevertheless, while challenging interviewing undermines the credibility of the extreme right actor and attenuate the normalisation of his views in society, normalisation effects do not entirely disappear, but materialise at a lower rate. The normalisation of extreme right beliefs thus results from

platforming extreme right actors and cannot be solved by adverse interviewing. Finally, we find that, while the exposure to the interview shifts people's views and norms to the right, they perceive the actor more negatively, and especially when he is challenged by a journalist. There appears to be a trade-off for extreme right actors who gain exposure on media outlets: Their views become normalised, but people find them personally less credible.

Our study makes important contributions to our understanding of media effects on public opinion and social norms. We provide evidence for the attitudinal and normalisation effects of media exposure of extreme right actors and messages. Individuals appear to update their attitudes in the ideological direction of the message, which is consistent with more general findings from survey experiments in the United States (Coppock 2023). However, it is striking that this is even the case if strong source cues related to extreme right content are present. Moreover, we find that exposure to the interview makes people update their opinions about the statements because they believe that such statements are more accurate. This finding goes against the backlash hypothesis, which would predict that people move in opposite directions based on their ideological priors, leading to polarisation. This is not the case: Exposure to extreme right actors radicalises audiences but does not polarise them. Our findings also suggest that the type of platform 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 that 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 the UK and in Australia, we complement media studies that primarily focus on the US setting (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007, Gerber et al. 2009, Martin and Yurukoglu 2017). Our experiments combine a high degree of internal validity with environmental and external validity by exploiting real-life interviews and reaching similar conclusions in Australia and the UK. At the expense of not being able to detect if these attitudinal and normalisation effects are durable and long-lasting, we can show that these effects are consistent in countries with varying shares of

conservative media. Interviews with extreme right actors shift people's views to the right in environments whether people are exposed to two thirds of conservative media (like in Australia), or only one third (like in the UK). We have also shown that Sky News is considered as mainstream and trustworthy as the other traditional channels in each respective country. We are, thus, confident that the platforming effects that we document can travel to other countries and other traditional mainstream channels.

This study also makes important contributions to the emerging literature on the normalisation of the extreme right (Bischof and Wagner 2019, Valentim 2021). While often assumed but rarely tested, we have demonstrated that media is a contributing factor to the growing social acceptance of previously sanctioned political attitudes in society. By giving extreme right actors a platform to air their views, media channels contribute to normalising hatred and extremist violence against minority groups, thus undermining values and norms of liberal democracy. Further far right research on normalisation should include the role of media as a significant mediating effect towards increased public expressions of support for the far right. Additionally, this study has focused on the extreme right but further studies should investigate the media platforming effects on extreme left views and actors.

Our study has three significant implications for politicians, policymakers and journalists. First, the consumption of extreme right content is a major source of concern since it radicalises individuals and normalises extreme views in society. Being exposed to an interview with an extreme right actor is enough for people to conform to the views expressed in the interview, regardless of the platform on which it was conveyed. That said, and this is our second (more positive) implication, these persuasion and normalisation effects come at the cost of the reputation of the actor and can (somewhat) be alleviated by the way journalists engage with extreme right actors. Journalists who challenge the actor by fact checking his claims nullify the effectiveness of the conveyed message and significantly reduce the normalisation process. Finally, reach matters. Media platforms, no matter if they are traditional mainstream or alternative internet platforms, serve as powerful spaces for spreading and normalising extreme right content. The power of traditional mainstream media sources lies more in their ability to capture a large audience than in any inherent difference in the effectiveness of their messages.

As a result, our study points to the need for journalists to adopt an adversarial, critical tone, questioning the accuracy of false statements, when they interview extreme right actors and for politicians and tech entrepreneurs to consider de-platforming, i.e. the removal of extreme-right actors from media outlets. De-platforming can be an effective tool to minimise the reach of far-right actors and hate speech, as shown by recent studies (Rauchfleisch and Kaiser 2021). In times of growing exposure of extremist content on traditional and social media, having journalists that question the accuracy of extreme right beliefs and media companies that are willing to enforce standards and de-platform individuals who break them are some measures that could counter the further spread of extreme right beliefs.

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Appendix

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1 Forms and questionnaires

1.1 Information form

Figure 1.1: 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

1.2 Consent form

Figure 1.2: 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

1.3 Debrief forms

Figure 1.3: 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 1.4: 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.

1.4 Questionnaires

Figure 1.5: 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? (7 scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

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 1.6: 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 Agree to Strongly Disagree)

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

11. Where was the interview broadcast?

ITV

Youtube Channels

BBC

Sky News

12. 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) 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.

1.5 Transcripts of the audio recordings

The Australian First Study

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, something 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 Bundoorra 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. Sky News.

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

The Australian Second Study

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, something 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).

The British Study

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 what 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 what 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).

2 Other models

2.1 With covariate coefficients

2.2 Multinomial logit regression

2.3 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 | | 1.28*** (0.04) | | 1.28*** (0.04) | | 0.52*** (0.03) | | 0.52*** (0.03) |
| 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 2.1: 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 | | 0.58*** (0.04) | | 0.58*** (0.04) | | 0.39*** (0.03) | | 0.39*** (0.03) |
| <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 2.3: 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 | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| AIC | 7415.57 | 6598.70 | 7419.51 | 6602.41 | 9757.55 | 8881.34 | 9765.17 | 8889.04 |
| BIC | 7467.81 | 6912.11 | 7484.81 | 6928.88 | 9810.43 | 9264.68 | 9844.48 | 9298.81 |
| 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 2.4: 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 2.5: 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 2.6: 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 2.7: 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 2.8: Normative Items- UK

3 Robustness checks

3.1 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 3.9: 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 3.10: Manipulation Checks

| | 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 3.11: Attrition

3.2 Attention checks

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 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 | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| R ² | 0.01 | 0.36 | 0.01 | 0.36 | 0.00 | 0.21 | 0.01 | 0.21 |
| 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.

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).

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

Table 3.12: Extreme right attitudes: with attention checks

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 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 | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| R ² | 0.01 | 0.25 | 0.01 | 0.25 | 0.01 | 0.12 | 0.01 | 0.12 |
| 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.

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).

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

Table 3.13: 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 | | | | | | | | |
| AIC | 7415.57 | 6598.70 | 7419.51 | 6602.41 | 7811.24 | 7191.07 | 7818.75 | 7197.94 |
| BIC | 7467.81 | 6912.11 | 7484.81 | 6928.88 | 7862.54 | 7563.00 | 7895.70 | 7595.52 |
| 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.

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).

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

Table 3.14: Respectability of extreme right actors: with attention checks

3.3 Media strategy effects

| | United Kingdom | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Attitudes | | Norms | | Actors | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| <i>Reference: Unchallenged interview</i> | | | | | | |
| Challenged interview | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.04*** (0.01) | -0.08*** (0.02) | -0.08*** (0.01) |
| Sky News platform | 0.01 | -0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.00 | -0.01 |
| Constant | 0.38*** (0.01) | 0.13*** (0.03) | 0.40*** (0.01) | 0.21*** (0.04) | 0.36*** (0.01) | 0.21*** (0.06) |
| Covariate adjustment | | Yes | | Yes | | 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 | 0.14 |
| Observations | 3635 | 3635 | 2997 | 2997 | 3420 | 3420 |

Standard errors in parentheses.

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

We exclude the two control groups where respondents listen to the weather report.

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

Table 3.15: Media strategy effects

4 Subgroup effects

4.1 Those who rank Sky News as a mainstream platform

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|----------|
| | Australia | | | United Kingdom | | |
| | Attitudes | Norms | Actor | Attitudes | Norms | Actor |
| <i>Reference: Weather report</i> | | | | | | |
| Unchallenged interview | 0.06* | 0.05* | -0.91* | 0.02* | 0.04*** | -0.46*** |
| | (0.02) | (0.02) | | (0.01) | (0.01) | |
| Sky News platform | 0.05* | 0.01 | 0.51* | 0.01 | 0.01 | -0.02 |
| | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.23) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.07) |
| Constant | 0.37*** | 0.40*** | 0.77 | 0.34*** | 0.34*** | -0.36*** |
| | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.46) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.08) |
| R ² | 0.02 | 0.01 | | 0.00 | 0.01 | |
| Adj. R ² | 0.02 | 0.01 | | 0.00 | 0.00 | |
| Observations | 576 | 526 | 628 | 3749 | 3171 | 3749 |
| AIC | | | 816.79 | | | 6380.54 |
| BIC | | | 843.44 | | | 6417.91 |
| Log Likelihood | | | -402.39 | | | -3184.27 |

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

The Australian results are drawn from the second wave only, hence the lower number of observations

We use multinomial logit regression models for the effects on actors. The results of the missing values are not reported.

Table 4.16: Among those who ranked Sky News as a mainstream platform

4.2 Those who know the actors

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Australia | | United Kingdom | |
| <i>Reference: Weather report</i> | | | | |
| Unchallenged interview | 0.04*** (0.01) | 0.05*** (0.01) | 0.03*** (0.01) | 0.02 (0.01) |
| Challenged interview | | | -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) | 0.00 (0.01) |
| Have heard of the extreme right actor | 0.05** (0.02) | 0.05* (0.02) | -0.01 (0.01) | -0.01 (0.01) |
| Unchallenged interview x know the actor | | -0.01 (0.03) | | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Challenged interview x know the actor | | | | 0.00 (0.02) |
| Constant | -0.14 | -0.14 | 0.10*** | 0.11*** |
| Covariate adjustment | | Yes | | Yes |
| | (0.08) | (0.08) | (0.03) | (0.03) |
| R ² | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.22 | 0.22 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.22 | 0.22 |
| Observations | 1431 | 1431 | 4696 | 4696 |

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 4.17: Extreme right attitudes: Know the actor

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Australia | | United Kingdom | |
| <i>Reference: Weather report</i> | | | | |
| Unchallenged interview | 0.04*** (0.01) | 0.04** (0.01) | 0.05*** (0.01) | 0.05** (0.02) |
| Challenged interview | | | 0.02* (0.01) | 0.02 (0.02) |
| <i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i> | | | | |
| Sky News Platform | -0.01 (0.01) | -0.01 (0.01) | 0.01 (0.01) | 0.01 (0.01) |
| Have heard of the extreme right actor | 0.04* (0.02) | 0.04 (0.02) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.02) |
| Unchallenged interview x know the actor | | 0.00 (0.03) | | 0.00 (0.02) |
| Challenged interview x know the actor | | | | -0.00 (0.02) |
| Constant | -0.17* (0.07) | -0.17* (0.07) | 0.16*** (0.03) | 0.16*** (0.03) |
| R ² | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.13 | 0.13 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.13 | 0.13 |
| Observations | 1297 | 1297 | 3908 | 3908 |

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 4.18: Extreme right norms: Know the actor

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| | Australia | | United Kingdom | |
| Baseline category: The actor is not respectable | | | | |
| Among those who find the actor respectable | | | | |
| <i>Reference: Weather report</i> | | | | |
| Unchallenged interview | -0.40* | 1.05*** | -0.35*** | -2.11*** |
| | (0.18) | (0.16) | (0.09) | (0.21) |
| Challenged interview | | | -0.79*** | -2.80*** |
| <i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i> | | | | |
| Sky News Platform | -0.22* | -0.22* | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| | (0.11) | (0.11) | (0.07) | (0.07) |
| Have heard of the extreme right actor | -0.09 | 1.35*** | -0.73*** | -2.52*** |
| | (0.14) | (0.16) | (0.08) | (0.19) |
| Unchallenged interview x know the actor | | -1.45*** | | 2.20*** |
| | | (0.19) | | (0.23) |
| Challenged interview x know the actor | | | | 2.55*** |
| | | | | (0.23) |
| Constant | -2.58*** | -4.02*** | -0.71* | 0.76* |
| | (0.60) | (0.43) | (0.29) | (0.33) |
| Among those who answer Don't Know | | | | |
| <i>Reference: Weather report</i> | | | | |
| Unchallenged interview | -6.54*** | -19.72*** | -1.55*** | -3.23*** |
| | (0.28) | (0.24) | (0.15) | (0.25) |
| Challenged interview | | | -1.70*** | -3.44*** |
| <i>Reference: YouTube Channel platform</i> | | | | |
| Sky News Platform | -0.28* | -0.27 | -0.09 | -0.08 |
| | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.11) | (0.12) |
| | | | (0.14) | (0.25) |
| Have heard of the extreme right actor | -6.27*** | -19.79*** | -1.71*** | -3.34*** |
| | (0.30) | (0.24) | (0.12) | (0.21) |
| Unchallenged interview x know the actor | | 18.59*** | | 2.42*** |
| | | (0.31) | | (0.32) |
| Challenged interview x know the actor | | | | 2.50*** |
| | | | | (0.31) |
| Constant | 3.85*** | 16.80*** | -1.24** | -0.02 |
| | (0.82) | (0.64) | (0.45) | (0.48) |
| AIC | 4073.52 | 3889.59 | 7157.43 | 6988.36 |
| BIC | 4387.31 | 4215.94 | 7544.70 | 7401.44 |
| Log Likelihood | -1986.76 | -1892.80 | -3518.72 | -3430.18 |
| Observations | 3928 | 3928 | 4696 | 4696 |
| R ² | 0.37 | 0.42 | 0.13 | 0.14 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.36 | 0.41 | 0.13 | 0.14 |
| Observations | 2019 | 2019 | 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 4.19: Respectability of the actor: Know the actor