

Reliable Sources?

Correcting Misinformation in Polarized Media Environments

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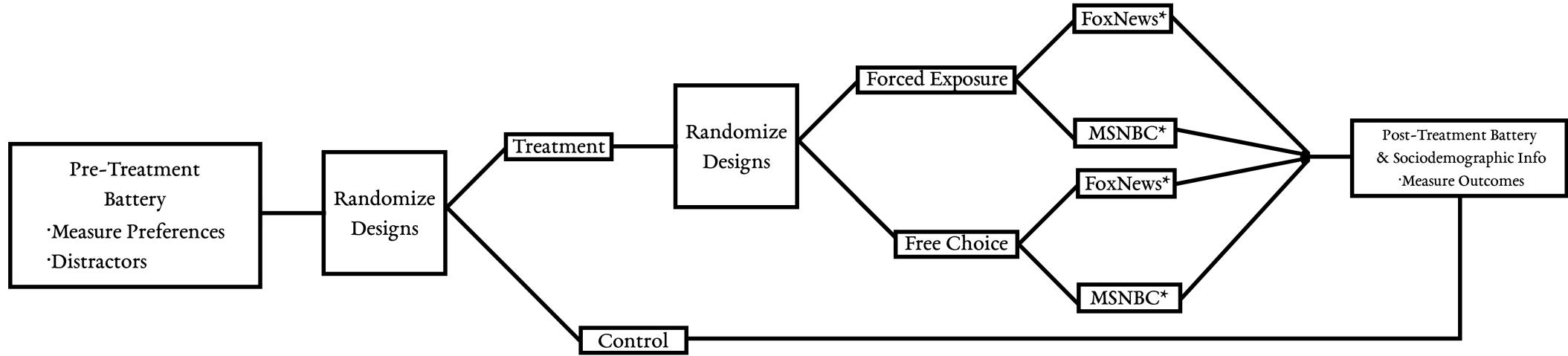
Why misinformation corrections (often) fail

1. Correcting erroneous factual beliefs does not necessarily imply change in related attitudes.
 2. People who are more likely to access misinformation corrections are least likely to need them.
- **Our goal:** Examine the effect of misinformation corrections on *factual beliefs and related attitudes*, while accounting for *endogenous information search*.

1. Hopkins, D. J.; Sides, J. & Citrin, J. 2019. "The muted consequences of correct information about immigration." *The Journal of Politics* 81: 315-320.

2. Guess, A. M.; Nyhan, B. & Reifler, J. 2020. "Exposure to untrustworthy websites in the 2016 US election." *Nature Human Behaviour*

A Preference-Incorporating Choice and Assignment (PICA) Design



Knox, D.; Yamamoto, T.; Baum, M. A. & Berinsky, A. J. 2019. "Design, identification, and sensitivity analysis for patient preference trials." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*.

De Benedictis-Kessner, J.; Baum, M. A.; Berinsky, A. J. & Yamamoto, T. 2019. "Persuading the Enemy: Estimating the Persuasive Effects of Partisan Media with the Preference-Incorporating Choice and Assignment Design." *American Political Science Review* 113: 902-916.

Leeper, T. J. 2020. "Raising the Floor or Closing the Gap? How Media Choice and Media Content Impact Political Knowledge." *Political Communication*.

Information treatment

- In the following section, we are going to show you a random tweet drawn from the accounts of [two/several] large news organizations. **You can choose from which Twitter account the random tweet will be drawn.** Afterwards, we are going to ask you some questions about the content of the news story.

 **Fox News Alert**  @foxnewsalert · 5h

BREAKING NEWS: Immigrant-owned businesses employed almost 8 million American workers and generated \$1.3 trillion in total sales in 2019, up from 2018 totals - New report based on US Census Bureau data


Fox News: Live Breaking News
Real News. Real Honest Opinion.
4.5/5.0 stars – 401,130 ratings

57 133 790 

 **MSNBC**  @MSNBC · 5h

BREAKING NEWS: Immigrant-owned businesses employed almost 8 million American workers and generated \$1.3 trillion in total sales in 2019, up from 2018 totals - New report based on US Census Bureau data


MSNBC Breaking News
This is who we are. This is why you watch.
4.5/5.0 stars – 401,130 ratings

57 133 790 

Models of Complete and Incomplete Updating

- **Complete Updating:**
 - | reality → beliefs → interpretations → opinions
- **Fact Avoidance:**
 - | reality || beliefs → interpretations → opinions
- **Meaning Avoidance:**
 - | reality → beliefs || interpretations → opinions
- **Opinion Avoidance:**
 - | reality → beliefs → interpretations || opinions

Gaines, B. J.; Kuklinski, J. H.; Quirk, P. J.; Peyton, B. & Verkuilen, J. 2007. "Same facts, different interpretations: Partisan motivation and opinion on Iraq." *Journal of Politics* 69: 957-974.

Measuring Belief, Interpretation, and Opinion

- **Belief:**
 - Across the United States, how many workers – immigrant and US-born – do you think are employed by immigrant-owned businesses?
- **Interpretation:**
 - On average, would you say that people who come to live here from other countries will take jobs away from people already here or add to the economy by creating additional jobs?
- **Opinion:**
 - Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be [increased/left the same/decreased]?

Hypotheses

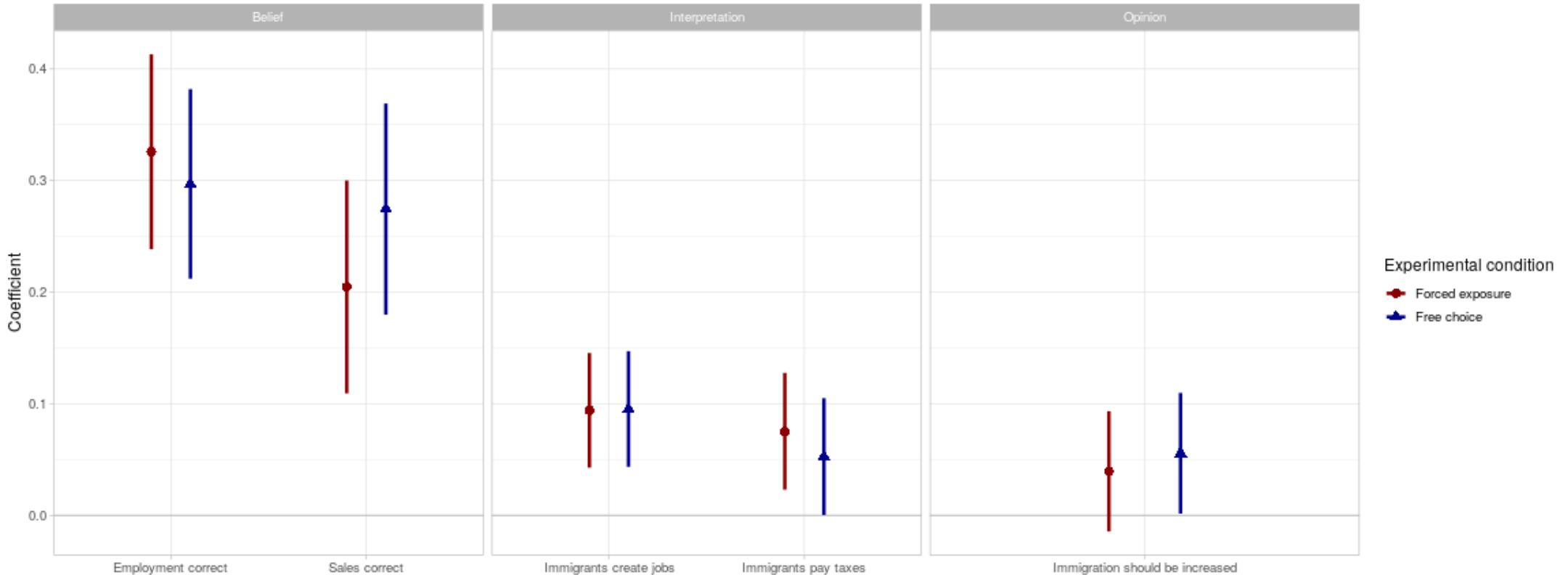
- **H1:** Misinformation corrections have stronger effects on people's *factual* beliefs than their related *interpretations* or *opinions*.
- **H2:** Misinformation corrections have stronger effects on people's beliefs, interpretations, and opinions if participants are given the opportunity to choose a news organization.*
- **H3:** Misinformation corrections have stronger effects on people's beliefs, interpretations, and opinions if participants are exposed to a news organization that is *consistent with their media preferences*.*
- **H4:** Participants who are exposed to a news organization that is *consistent with their media preferences* are more likely to evaluate the article positively and share it with others.

*This difference is more pronounced for interpretations and opinions.

Forced exposure vs. free choice



Forced exposure vs. free choice

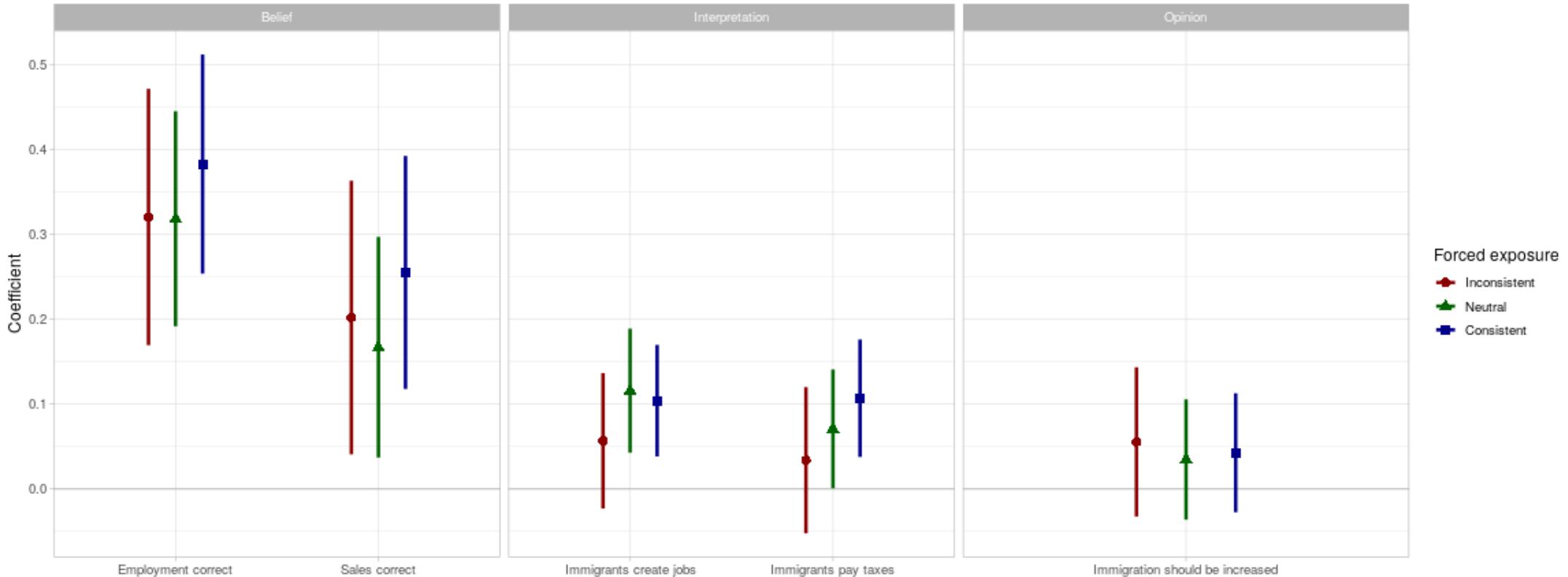


Coefficients are based on linear regression models controlling for pre-treatment covariates.

The role of media preferences

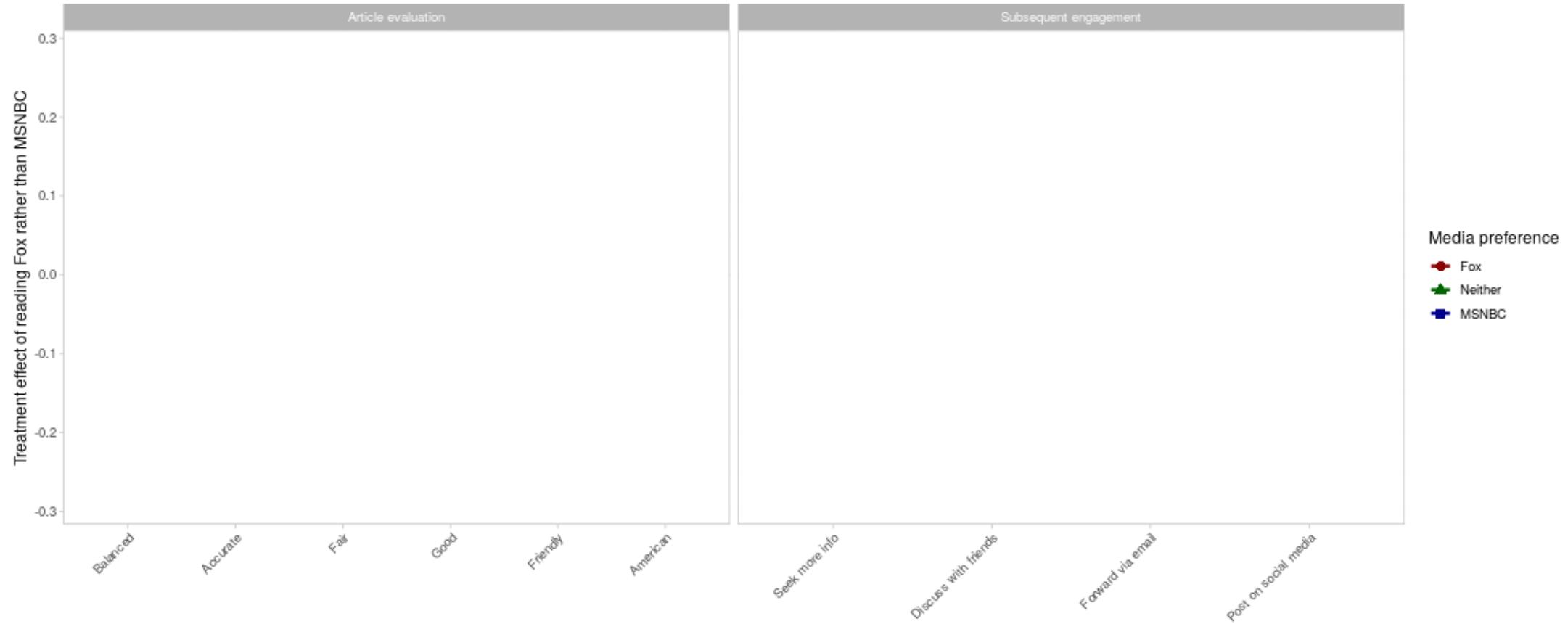


The role of media preferences

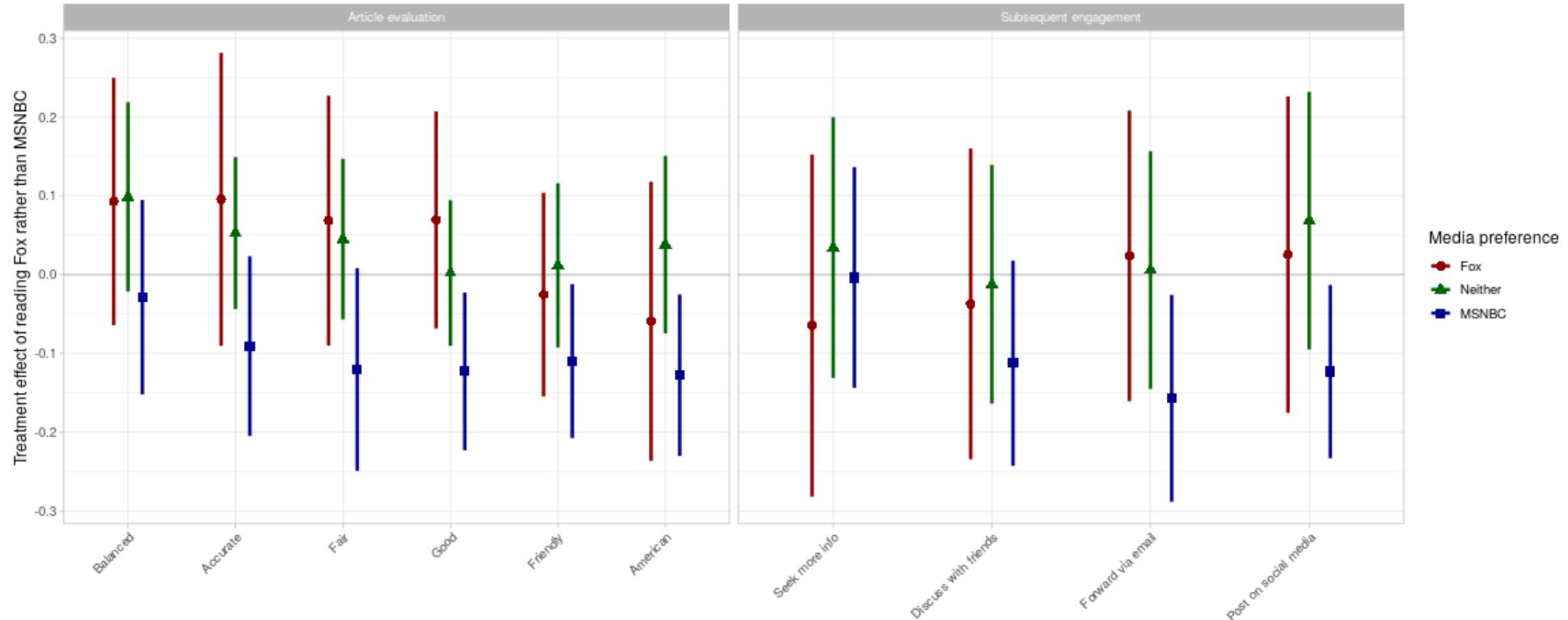


Coefficients are based on linear regression models controlling for pre-treatment covariates.

Fox vs. MSNBC: Evaluation & engagement



Fox vs. MSNBC: Evaluation & engagement



Average Choice-specific Treatment Effects (ACTEs) conditional on pre-treatment media preferences.

Conclusion and future directions

Thanks for watching!

Questions, comments?



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🐙 @pwkraft

🔗 <https://pwkraft.github.io>

💻 <https://experimentalpolitics.github.io>

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